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LADY OF THE LAKE

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The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

—
CANTO I.
—

THE CHASE.

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8. 4. 32

TORONTO:
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1876.

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1876

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CHASE.

HARP of the North ! that mouldering long hast hung,
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's Spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string—
O minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high !
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bow'd :
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's
matchless eye.

O wake once more ! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray ;
O wake once more ! tho' scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay :

Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
 And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
 Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
 The wizard note has not been touch'd in vain,
 Then silent be no more ! Enchantress, wake again !

I.

THE Stag at eve had drunk its fill,
 Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
 And deep his midnight lair had made
 In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
 But, when the sun his beacon red 5
 Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
 The deep-mouthed blood-hound's heavy bay
 Resounded up the rocky way,
 And faint, from farther distance borne,
 Were heard the clanging hoof and horn. 10

II.

As chief who hears his warder call,
 "To arms ! the foemen storm the wall,"—
 The antler'd monarch of the waste
 Sprang from his heathery couch in haste ;
 But, ere his fleet career he took, 15
 The dew-drops from his flanks he shook ;
 Like crested leader proud and high,
 Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky ;
 A moment gazed adown the dale,
 A moment snuffed the tainted gale, 20
 A moment list'ned to the cry,
 That thickened as the chase drew nigh ;
 Then as the headmost foes appeared,
 With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
 And, stretching forward free and far, 25
 Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yelled on the view the opening pack,
 Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back ;

To many a mingled sound at once
 The awakened mountain gave response.
 A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong, 80
 Clattered a hundred steeds along,
 Their peal the merry horns rung out,
 A hundred voices joined the shout ;
 With bark, and whoop, and wild halloo,
 No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew. 85
 Far from the tumult fled the roe,
 Close in her covert cowered the doe,
 The falcon, from her cairn on high,
 Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
 Till far beyond her piercing ken 90
 The hurricane had swept the glen.
 Faint, and more faint, its failing din
 Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
 And silence settled, wide and still,
 On the lone wood and mighty hill. 95

IV.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
 Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
 And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told
 A giant made his den of old ;
 For ere that steep ascent was won, 50
 High in his pathway hung the sun,
 And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
 Was fain to breathe his faltering horse ;
 And of the trackers of the deer
 Scarce half the lessening pack was near ; 55
 So shrewdly on the mountain side,
 Had the bold burst their metal tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now,
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,
 Where broad extended far beneath, 60
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,

And pondered refuge from his toil,
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle. 65
 But nearer was the copse-wood gray,
 That waved and wept on Loch-Achray.
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Ben-venue.
 Fresh vigour with the hope returned, 70
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,
 Held westward with unwearied race,
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
 As swept the hunt through Cambus-more; 75
 What reins were tightened in despair,
 When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
 Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
 Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
 For twice, that day, from shore to shore, 80
 The gallant Stag swam stoutly o'er.
 Few were the stragglers, following far,
 That reached the lake of Vennachar;
 And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
 The headmost Horseman rode alone. 85

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
 For, jaded now, and spent with toil,
 Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
 While every gasp with sobs he drew, 90
 The labouring Stag, strained full in view.
 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
 Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
 Fast on his flying traces came,
 And all but won that desperate game; 95
 For, scarce a spear's length from its haunch
 Vindictive toiled the blood-hounds stanch;
 Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
 Nor further might the quarry strain.

Thus up the margin of the lake, 100
 Between the precipice and brake,
 O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The hunter marked that mountain high,
 The lone lake's western boundary,
 And deemed the Stag must turn to bay, 105
 Where that huge rampart barred the way ;
 Already glorying in the prize,
 Measured his antlers with his eyes ;
 For the death-wound, and death-ha'loo,
 Mustered his breath, his whinyard-drew ; 110
 But thundering as he came prepared,
 With ready arm and weapon bared,
 The wily quarry shunned the shock,
 And turned him from the opposing rock ;
 Then, dashing down a darksome glen, 115
 Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
 In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
 His solitary refuge took.
 There, while close couched, the thicket shed
 Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head, 120
 He heard the baffled dogs in vain
 Rave through the hollow pass amain,
 Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
 To cheer them on the vanished game, 125
 But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
 The gallant horse exhausted fell ;
 The impatient rider strove in vain
 To rouse him with the spur and rein,
 For the good steed, his labours o'er, 130
 Stretched his stiff limbs to rise no more ;
 —Then, touched with pity and remorse.
 He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
 "I little thought, when first thy rein
 I slacked upon the banks of Seine, 135

That highland eagle e'er should feed
 On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
 Wee worth the chase, wee worth the day
 That cost thy life, my gallant gray!"—

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds, 140
 From vain pursuit to call the hounds,
 Back limped, with slow and crippled pace
 The sulky leaders of the chase;
 Close to their master's side they pressed,
 With drooping tail and humbled crest; 145
 But still the dingle's hollow throat
 Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
 The owlets started from their dream,
 The eagles answered with their scream,
 Round and around the sounds were cast 150
 Till echo seemed an answering blast;
 And on the hunter hied his way,
 To join some comrades of the day;
 Yet often paused, so strange the road,
 So wondrous were the scenes it show'd. 155

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
 Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
 Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
 Was bathed in floods of living fire. 160
 But not a setting beam could glow
 Within the dark ravines below.
 Where twin'd the path, in shadow hid,
 Round many a rocky pyramid,
 shooting abruptly from the dell
 Its thunder-splintered pinnacle; 165
 Round many an insulated mass,
 The native bulwarks of the pass,
 Huge as the tower which builders vain
 Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain—
 The rocky summits split and rent, 170
 formed turret, dome, or battlement,

Or seemed fantastically set
 With cupola or minaret,
 Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
 Or mosque of eastern architect. 175
 Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
 Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
 For, from their shivered brows displayed,
 Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
 All twinkling with the dew drop sheen, 180
 The briar-rose fell in streamers green,
 And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes,
 Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
 Each plant or flower, the mountain's child 185
 Here eglantine embalmed the air,
 Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
 The primrose pale, and violet flower,
 Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
 Foxglove and nightshade, side by side, 190
 — Emblems of punishment and pride,
 Grouped their dark hues with every stain
 The weather-beaten crags retain.
 With boughs that quaked at every breath,
 Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ; 195
 Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
 Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
 And higher yet the pine-tree hung
 His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
 Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high, 200
 His bows athwart the narrowed sky.
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
 Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue ; 205
 So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
 The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
 A narrow inlet, still and deep,
 Affording scarce such breadth of brim, 210
 As served the wild duck's brood to swim ;
 Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
 But broader when again appearing,
 Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
 Could on the dark-blue mirror trace : 215
 And farther as the hunter strayed,
 Still broader sweep its channels made.
 The shaggy mound no longer stood,
 Emerging from entangled wood,
 But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float, 220
 Like castle girded with its moat ;
 Yet broader floods extending still,
 Divide them from their parent hill.
 Till each, retiring, claims to be
 An islet in an inland sea. 225

XIV.

And now to issue from the glen.
 No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
 Unless he climb, with footing nice,
 A far protecting precipice.
 The broom's tough roots his ladder made, 230
 The hazel saplings lent their aid ;
 And thus an airy point he won,
 Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
 One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
 Loch-Katrine lay beneath him rolled ; 235
 In all her length far winding lay,
 With promontory, creek, and bay,
 And islands that, empurpled bright,
 Floated amid the livelier light ;
 And mountains, that like giants stand, 240
 To sentinel enchanted land.
 High on the south, huge Ben-venue
 Down to the lake in masses threw
 Craggs, knolls, and mounds, confus'ly hurl'd,

The fragments of an earlier world ; 245
 A wildering forest feather'd o'er
 His ruined sides and summit hoar,
 While on the north through middle air,
 Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed 250
 The Stranger, raptured and amazed.
 And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
 "For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
 On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower ; 255
 On yonder meadow, far away,
 The turrets of a cloister gray,
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide, on the lake the lingering morn !
 How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute 260
 Chime, when the groves were still and mute !
 And, when the midnight moon should lave
 Her forehead in the silver wave,
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matin's distant hum. 265
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell—
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all, 270
 Should each bewildered stranger call
 To friendly feast, and lighted hall. ↘

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here !
 But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare. 275
 The copse must give my evening fare ;
 Some mossy bank my couch must be,
 Some rustling oak my canopy.
 Yet pass we that ;—the war and chase
 Give little choice of resting place ;— 280

A summer night, in greenwood spent,
 Were but to-morrow's merriment ;
 But hosts may in these wilds abound,
 Such as are better missed than found ;
 To meet with highland plunderers here 285
 Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
 I am alone ;—my bugle strain
 May call some straggler of the train ;
 Or, fall the worst that may beude,
 Ere now this falchion has been tried." 290

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
 When lo ! forth starting at the sound,
 From underneath an aged oak,
 That slanted from the islet rock,
 A Damsel guider of its way, 295
 A little skiff shot to the bay,
 That round the promontory steep,
 Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
 Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
 The weeping willow twig to lave, 300
 And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
 The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
 The boat had touched this silver strand,
 Just as the Hunter left his stand,
 And stood concealed amid the brake, 305
 To view this Lady of the Lake.
 The maiden paused, as if again
 She thought to catch the distant strain,
 With head up-raised, and look intent,
 And eye and ear attentive bent, 310
 And looks flung back, and lips apart,
 Like monument of Grecian art,
 In listening mood, she seemed to stand
 This guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace 315
 A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,

Of finer form, or lovelier face !
 What though the sun, with ardent frown
 Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,— 320
 The sportive toil, which, short and light,
 Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
 Served too in hastier swell to show
 Short glimpses of a breast of snow :
 What though no rule of courtly grace
 To measured mood had trained her pace,— 325
 A foot more light, a step more true,
 Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew ;
 E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
 Elastic from her airy tread :
 What though upon her speech there hung 330
 The accents of the mountain tongue,—
 Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
 The list'ner held his breath to hear.

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid ; 335
 Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
 Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd :
 And seldom was a snood amid
 Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
 Whose glossy black to shame might bring 340
 The plumage of the raven's wing ;
 And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
 Mantled a plaid with modest care ;
 And never brooch the folds combined
 Above a heart more good and kind ;
 Her kindness and her worth to spy, 345
 You need but gaze on Ellen's eye ;
 Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
 Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
 Than every free-born glance confessed
 The guileless movements of her breast ; 350
 Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
 Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
 Or filial love was glowing there,
 Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
 Or tale of injury called forth 355

The indignant spirit of the north.
 One only passion, unrevealed,
 With maiden pride the maid concealed,
 Yet not less purely felt the flame ;—
 O need I tell that passion's name ! 366

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
 Now on the gale her voice was borne :—
 “ Father !” she cried ; the rocks around
 Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
 A while she paused, no answer came,— 365
 “ Malcolm, was thine the blast ?” the name
 Less resolutely uttered fell,
 The echoes could not catch the swell.
 “ A stranger I,” the Huntsman said,
 Advancing from the hazel shade. 370
 The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar,
 Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
 And when a space was gained between,
 Closer she drew her bosom's screen :
 (So forth the startled swan would swing, 375
 So turn to prune his ruffled wing,)
 Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
 She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
 Not his the form, nor his the eye,
 That youthful maidens wont to fly. 380

XXI.

On his bold visage, middle age
 Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
 Yet had not quenched the open truth
 And fiery vehemence of youth ;
 Forward and frolic glee was there, 385
 The will to do, the soul to dare,
 The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
 Of hasty love, or headlong ire ;
 His limbs were cast in manly mould,
 For hardy sports, or contest bold ; 390
 And though in peaceful garb arrayed,

And weaponless, except his blade,
 His stately mien as well implied
 A high-born heart, a martial pride,
 As if a baron's crest he wore, 395
 And, sheathed in armour, trod the shore,
 Slighting the petty need he showed,
 He told of his benighted road ;
 His ready speech flowed fair and free,
 In phrase of gentle courtesy ; 400
 Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
 Less use to sue than to command.

XXII.

Awhile the maid the Stranger eyed,
 And, re-assured, at last replied,
 That highland homes were open still 410
 To wildered wanderers of the hill.
 " Nor think you unexpected come
 To yon lone isle, our desert home ;
 Before the heath had lost the dew,
 This morn, a couch was pulled for you : 415
 On yonder mountain's purple head
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bred,
 And our broad nets have swept the mere,
 To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
 " Now, by the rood, my lovely maid, 420
 Your courtesy has erred," he said ;
 " No right have I to claim, misplaced,
 The welcome of expected guest ;
 A wanderer here, by fortune tost,
 My way, my friends, my courser, lost ; 425
 I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
 Have ever drawn your mountain air,
 Till on this lake's romantic strand,
 found a fay in fairy land."—

XXIII.

" I well believe," the maid replied, 430
 As her light skiff approached the side,
 " I well believe that ne'er before

Your foot has trod Loch-Katrine's shore ;
 But yet, as far as yesternight,
 Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,— 435
 A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
 — Was on the visioned future bent,
 He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
 Lie dead beneath the birchen way ;
 Painted exact your form and mien, 440
 Your hunting suit of Lincoln green ;
 That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
 That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
 That cap with heron's plumage trim, 445
 And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
 He bade that all should ready be,
 To trace a guest of fair degree :
 But light I held his prophecy,
 And deemed it was my father's horn,
 Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."— 450

XXIV.

The Stranger smiled :—" Since to your home,
 A destined errant knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievements bold, 455
 I'll rightly front each high emprize,
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes ;
 Permit me, first, the task to guide
 Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
 The maid with smile suppressed and sly, 460
 The toil unwonted saw him try ;
 For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
 His noble hand had grasped an oar ;
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
 And o'er the lake the shallop flew ;
 With heads erect, and whimpering cry, 465
 The hounds behind their passage ply ;
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break
 The darkening mirror of the lake,
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach. 470

XXV.

The stranger viewed the shore around :
 'Twas all so close with cypresswood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there.
 Until the mountain-maiden showed 475
 A clambering unsuspected road,
 That winded through the tangled screen,
 And opened on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round,
 With their long fibres swept the ground : 480
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
 But strange of structure and device ;
 Of such materials, as around 485
 The workman's hand had readiest found :
 Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
 And by the hatchet rudely squared,
 To give the walls their destined height
 The sturdy oak and ash unite ; 490
 While moss and clay and leaves combined
 To fence each crevice from the wind ;
 The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
 Their slender length for rafters spread,
 And withered heath and rushes dry 495
 Supplied a russet canopy,
 Due westward fronting to the green,
 A rural portico was seen,
 Aloft on native pillars borne,
 Of mountain fir with bark unshorn, 500
 Where Eden's hand had taught to twine
 The ivy and Idæan vine,
 The clematis, the favoured flower,
 Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
 And every hardy plant could bear 510
 Loch-Katrine's keen and searching air,
 An instant in this porch she staid,

And gaily to the Stranger said,
 "Oh heaven and in thy holy cell,
 And enter the enchanted hall!"

515

XIVII.

My hope, my heaven, my trust, must be,
 My gentle guide, in following thee!"—
 He crossed the threshold—and a clang
 Of angry steel that instant rang.
 To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
 But soon for man alarm he blushed,
 When on the floor he saw displayed,
 Cause of the din, a naked blade,
 Dropped from the sheath, that careless hung,
 Upon a stag's huge antler's swing;
 For all around the walls to grace,
 Hung trophies of the hunt or chase;
 A target there, a couple here,
 A boar's-ane & hunting spear,
 And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
 With the rushed trophies of the boar,
 Here galls the wolf as when he died,
 And there the wild-cat's brinded hide:
 The hunter of the elk adorns
 Or manes for the bison's horns;
 Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
 That blackening streaks of blood retained
 And deer-skins, dappled dun, and white,
 With one's fur and seal's unite,
 In rude and unpolish way set all,
 To garnish forth the stivan hall.

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XVIII.

The wondering Stranger round him gazed,
 And near the fallen weapon raised:
 Now were the arms whose sinewy strength
 Sufficed to stretch it forth at length;
 And as the brand he poised and swayed,
 "I never knew but one," he said,
 "Whose stalwart arm might look to wield

545

A blade like this in battle field."
 She sighed, then smiled and took the word; 550
 "You see the guardian champion's sword:
 As light it trembles in his hand,
 As in my grasp a hazel wand;
 My sire's tall form might grace the part
 Of Ferragus or Ascabart; 555
 But in the absent giant's hold
 Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
 Mature of age, a graceful dame; 560
 Whose easy step and stately poit
 Had well become a princely court,
 To whom, though more than kindred knew
 Young Ellen gave a mother's due;
 Meet welcome to her guest she made,
 And every courteous rite was paid, 565
 That hospitality could claim,
 Though all unasked his birth and name.
 Such then the reverence to a guest,
 That fellest foe might join the feast,
 And from his deadliest foeman's door, 570
 Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
 At length his rank the Stranger names,
 "The knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James,
 Lord of a barren heritage,
 Which his brave sires, from age to age, 575
 By their good swords had held with toil;
 His sire had fall'n in such turmoil,
 And he, God wot, was forced to stand
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.
 This morning with Lord Moray's train 580
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
 Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
 Lost his good steed, and wandered here."—

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
 The name and state of Ellen's sire ; 585
 Well shewed the elder lady's mien,
 That courts and cities she had seen ;
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed
 The simple grace of sylvan maid,
 In speech and gesture, form and face, 590
 Shewed she was come of gentle race ;
 'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind :
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdown gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave ; 595
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turned all enquiry light away :-
 " Weird women we ! by dale and down,
 We dwell afar from tower and town .
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast, 600
 On wandering knights our spells we cast ;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string,
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
 She sung, and still a harp unseen
 Filled up the symphony between. 605

XXXI.

SONG.

" Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking ;
 Dream the battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall, 610
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall,
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest ! Thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more ; 615
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking ;
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.
 " No rude sound shall reach thine ear,

Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
 Trump nor pibroch summon here 620
 Mustering clan, squadron tramping,
 Yet the lark's shrill life may come
 At the day-break from the fallow,
 And the bittern sound his drum,
 Booming from the sedgy shallow. 625
 Ruder sounds shall none be near,
 Guards nor warders challenge here,
 Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
 Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."—

XXXII.

She paused—then blushing, led the lay 630
 To grace the stranger of the day ;
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong
 The cadence of the flowing song,
 Till to her lips in measured frame
 The minstrel verse spontaneous came. 635

SONG CONTINUED.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
 Dream not, with the rising sun,
 Bugles here shall sound the reveille.
 Sleep! the deer is in the den; 640
 Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying ;
 Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
 How thy gallant steed lay dying.
 Huntsman rest! thy chase is done,
 Think not of the rising sun, 645
 For, at dawning to assail ye,
 Here no bugles sound reveille."—

XXXIII.

The hall was cleared—the Stranger's bed
 Was there of mountain heather spread,
 Where oft a hundred guests had lain, 650
 And dreamed their forest sports again,

But vainly did the heath-flower shed
 Its moorland fragrance round his head ;
 Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
 The fever of his troubled breast ; 655
 In broken dreams the image rose
 Of varied perils, pains, and woes ;
 His steed now fleunders in the brake,
 Now sinks his barge upon the lake ;
 Now leader of a broken host, 660
 His standard falls, his honour's lost.
 Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
 Chase that worse phantom of the night !—
 Again returned the scenes of youth,
 Of confident undoubting truth ; 665
 Again his soul he interchanged
 With friends whose hearts were long estranged ;
 They come, in dim procession led,
 The cold, the faithless, and the dead ;
 As warm each hand, each brow as gay, 670
 As if they parted yesterday ;
 And doubt distracts him at the view,
 O were his senses false or true !
 — Dreamed he of death, or broken vow,
 Or is it all a vision now ? 675

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove,
 He seemed to walk, and speak of love !
 She listened with a blush and sigh,
 His suit was warm, his hopes were high ;
 He sought her yielded hand to clasp, 680
 And a cold gauntlet met his grasp :
 The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
 Upon its head a helmet shone ;
 Slowly enlarged to giant size,
 — With darkened cheek and threat'ning eyes 685
 The grisly visage stern and hoar,
 To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
 He woke, and, panting with affright,
 Recalled the vision of the night.
 The hearth's decaying brands were red, 690

And deep and dusky lustre shed,
 Half shewing, half concealing, all
 The uncouth trophies of the hall ;
 Mid those, the Stranger fixed his eye
 Where that huge falchion hung on high, 695
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
 Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
 He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom, 700
 Wasted around their rich perfume ;
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
 The aspens slept beneath the calm ;
 The silver light, with quivering glance,
 Played on the water's still expanse,— 705
 Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
 Could rage beneath the sober ray !
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
 While thus he communed with his breast :
 " Why is it at each turn I trace 710
 Some memory of that exiled race ?
 Can I not mountain maiden spy,
 But she must bear the Douglas eye ?
 Can I not view a highland brand,
 But it must match the Douglas hand?— 715
 Can I not frame a fevered dream,
 But still the Douglas is the theme?—
 I'll dream no more—by manly mind
 Not even in sleep is will resigned ;
 My midnight orisons said o'er, 720
 I'll turn to rest and dream no more."
 His midnight orison he told,
 A prayer with every bead of gold,
 Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
 And sunk in undisturbed repose. 725
 Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
 And morning dawned on Ben-venue.

NOTES.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Disturbed the heights of Uam-var.

Canto 1, Stanza iv.

Ua-var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly, *Uaigh-mor*, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callender in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant.

*Two dogs of black St. Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed.*

Canto 1, Stanza vii.

"These hounds which we call St. Hubert's hounds, are commonly all blacke, yet nevertheless, their race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St. Hubert have always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with St. Eustace. Whereupon we may conceive that (by the grace of God) all good huntsmen shall follow them into paradise."

*For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew.*

Canto 1, Stanza viii.

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horns being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar.

And now to issue from the glen.

Canto 1, Stanza xiv.

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, excepting by a sort of ladder composed of the branches and roots of trees.

*To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.*

Canto 1, Stanza xvi.

The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch-Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their lowland neighbours.

*A gray-haired sire, whose eye, intent,
Was on the visioned future bent.*

Canto 1, xxiii.

If force of evidence could authorize us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-Sight. It is called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of this faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may aptly be translated visionaries.

*Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.*

Canto 1, Stanza xxv.

The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and secluded situation.

*My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart.*

Canto 1, Stanza xxviii.

These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable.

Though all unasked his birth or name.

Canto 1, Stanza xxix.

The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment.

*—And still a harp unseen,
Filled up the harmony between.*

Canto 1, Stanza xxx.

How it happened that the noisy and inharmonious bagpipe banished the soft and expressive harp, we cannot say; but certain it is, that the bagpipe is now the only instrument that obtains universally in the highland districts.

The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

CANTO II.

THE ISLAND.

TORONTO:
W. WARWICK WELLINGTON STREET EAST.
1876.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO SECOND.

THE ISLAND.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving with reviving day :
And while yon little bark glides down the bay, 5
Wafting the Stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a Minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix'd with the sounding harp. O white-haired Allan-
bane!

II.

SONG.

“Not faster yonder rowers' might 10
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
That men from memory erase 15
The benefits of former days ;
Then. Stranger, go! good speed the while.
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line, 20

Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
 When Beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honoured meed be thine !
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind and dear, 25
 And lost in love's and friendship's smile,
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

SONG CONTINUED.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh, 30
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his highland home ;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show,
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe ;
 Remember then thy hap erewhile 35
 A stranger in the lonely isle.

" Or if on life's uncertain main,
 Mishap shall mar thy sail ;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
 Woe, want, and exile thou sustain 40
 Beneath the fickle gale ;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile
 To greet thee in the lonely isle." 45

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 The shallop reached the main-land side,
 And ere his onward way he took,
 The stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach 50
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree,

As wasted gray, and worn as he,
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to heaven, 55
 As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seemed watching the awakening fire ;
 So still he sate, as those who wait 60
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate ;
 So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair ;
 So still, as life itself were fled,
 In the last sound his harp had sped. 65

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Ellen sate and smiled ;
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vexed spaniel, from the beech,
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach, 70
 Yet tell me then, the maid who knows,
 — Why deepened on her cheek the rose?—
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see 75
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew ;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Shew me the fair would scorn to spy, 80
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loitered on the spot,
 It seemed as Ellen marked him not :
 But when he turned him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made ; 85
 And after oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day

Was dealt him by the brightest fair
 Who e're wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell, 90
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill ; 95
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 " My Malcolm ! vain and selfish maid !"
 " I was thus upbraiding conscience said,
 " Not so had Malcolm idly hung 100
 On the smooth phrase of southern tongue ;
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
 Another step than thine to spy.—
 " Wake, Allan-bane," aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side, 105
 Arouse thee from thy moody dream !
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a nobler name ;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme."
 Scarcely from her lip the word had rushed, 110
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed ;
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes, 115
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 —" Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid."
 Clasping his withered hands, he said,
 " Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain, 120
 Though all unwont to bid in vain ;
 Alas ! than mine a mightier hand
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned !
 I touch the cords of joy, but low
 And mournful answer notes of woe ; 125

And the proud march which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.—
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful father said, 130
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretel,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

‘But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
The eve thy sainted mother died:
And such the sounds which, while I strove 135
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall, 140
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair, 145
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe, 150
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die.’—

IX.

Soothing she answered him, “Assuage,
Mine honoured friend, the fears of age;
A'! melodics to thee are known, 155
That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
In lowland vale, or highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel then,
At times, unbidden notes should rise

Confus'dly bound in memory's ties.	160
Entangling as they rush along, The war-march with the funeral song?— Small ground is now for boding fear; Obscure but safe, we rest us here.	
My sire in native virtue great,	165
Resigning lordship, lands, and state, Not then to fortune more resigned. Than yonder oak might give the wind; The graceful foliage storms may reave,	
The noble stem they cannot grieve,	170
For me,"—she stooped, and, looking round, Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,	
"For me, whose memory scarce conveys An image of more splendid days, This little flower who loves the lea,	175
May well my simple emblem be; It drinks heaven's due as blythe as rose That in the king's own garden grows, And when I place it in my hair,	
Allan, a bard is bound to swear,	180
He ne'er saw coronet so fair." Then playfully the chaplet wild She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.	

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway, Wiled the old harper's mood away;	185
With such a look as hermits throw When angels stoop to soothe their woe, He gazed, till fond regret and pride Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:	
"Loveliest and best! thou little know'st	190
The rank, the honours thou hast lost! O might I live to see thee grace, In Scotland's court, thy birthbright place, To see my favourite's step advance,	
The lightest in the courtly dance,	195
The cause of every gallant's sigh, And leading star of every eye,	

And theme of every minstrel's art,
The lady of the Bleeding Heart!"*

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried, 200
(Light was her accent, yet she sighed,
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footstep spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey, 205
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine;
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say, 210
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway;
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."— 215

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repressed:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest,
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew; 220
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land. 225
Who else dared give,—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer,
Ev'n the rude refuge we have here? 230

* The well-known cognizance of the Douglas family.

\ Alas, this wild marauding chief,
 Alone might hazard our relief,
 And now thy maiden charms expand,
 Looks for his guerdon in thy hand ;
 Full soon may dispensation sought, 235
 To back his suit, from Rome be brought :
 Then, though an exile on the hill,
 Thy Father, as the Douglas, still
 Be held in reverence and fear ;
 And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear, 240
 That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
 Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread ;
 Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain !
 Thy hand is on the lion's mane."

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high 245
 Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
 "My debts to Roderick's house I know :
 All that a mother could bestow,
 To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
 Since first an orphan in the wild 250
 She sorrowed o'er her sister's child ;
 To her brave chieftain son, from ire
 Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
 A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
 And, could I pay it with my blood, 255
 Allan, Sir Roderick should command
 My blood, my life,—but not my hand,
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
 A votaress in Maronnan's cell ;
 Rather through realms beyond the sea, 260
 Seeking the world's cold charity,
 Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
 And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
 \ An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
 \ Than wed the man she cannot love. 265

XIV.

"Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray.—
 That pleading look, what can it say
 But what I own?—I grant him brave
 But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
 And generous—save vindictive mood, 270
 Or jealous transport, chafe his blood;
 I grant him true to friendly band,
 As his claymore is to his hand;
 But O! that very blade of steel
 More mercy for a foe would feel; 275
 I grant him liberal, to fling
 Among his clan the wealth they bring,
 When backed by lake and glen they wind,
 And in the Lowland leave behind,
 Where once some pleasant hamlet stood, 280
 A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
 The hand that for my father fought,
 I honour, as his daughter ought;
 But can I clasp it, reeking red,
 From peasants slaughtered in their shed? 285
 No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
 They make his passions darker seem.
 And flash along his spirit high,
 Like lightening o'er the midnight sky.
 While yet a child,—and children know, 290
 Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
 I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
 His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
 A maiden gown, I ill could bear
 His haughty mien and lordly air; 295
 But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
 In serious mood, to Roderick's name
 I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
 To change such odious theme were best.— 300
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"—

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore, 305
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe.
 If courtley spy, and harboured here, 310
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deemed of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say? 315
 —Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
 Bethink thee of the discord dread
 That kindled, when at Beltane game
 Thou led'st the dance with Malcolm Græme.
 Still, through thy sire the peace renewed, 320
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
 Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake, 325
 Still is the canna's* hoary beard,
 Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
 And hark again! some pipe of war
 Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were spied 330
 Four darkening specks upon the tide,
 That, slow enlarging on the view,
 Four manned and masted barges grew,
 And bearing downwards from Glengyle,
 Steered full upon the lonely isle; 335

* Cotton-grass.

The point of Brianchoil they passed,
 And, to the windward as they cast,
 Against the sun they gave to shine
 The bold Sir Roderick's bannered pine,
 Nearer and nearer as they bear, 340
 Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
 Now might you see the tartans brave,
 And plaids and plumage dance and wave;
 Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
 As his tough oar the rower plies : 345
 See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
 The wave ascending into smoke ;
 See the proud pipers on the bow,
 And mark the gaudy streamers flow
 From their loud chanters* down, and sweep 350
 The furrowed bosom of the deep,
 As, rushing through the lake amain,
 They plied the ancient highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
 And louder rung the pibroch proud. 355
 At first the sound, by distance tame,
 Mellowed along the waters came,
 And, lingering long by cape and bay,
 Wailed every harsher note away ;
 Then bursting bolder on the ear, 360
 The clan's shrill gathering they could hear ;
 Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
 Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
 Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
 The mustering hundreds shake the glen, 365
 And, hurrying at the signal dread,
 The battered earth returns their tread,
 Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
 Expressed their merry marching on,
 Ere peal of closing battle rose, 370

* The drone of the bagpipe.

With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
 And mimic din of stroke and ward,
 As broadswords upon target jarred;
 And groaning pause, ere yet again,
 Condensed, the battle yelled amain; 375
 The rapid charge, and rallying shout,
 Retreat borne headlong into rout,
 And bursts of triumph, to declare
 Cian-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
 Nor ended thus the strain; but slow, 380
 Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
 And changed the conquering clarion swell,
 For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
 Were busy with their echoes still; 385
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain
 Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud a hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
 Each boatman, bending to his oar, 390
 With measured sweep the burden bore,
 In such wild cadence, as the breeze
 Make's through December's leafless trees,
 "The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho! iro!" 395
 And near and nearer as they rowed,
 Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

BOAT SONG

Fail to the chief who in triumph advances!
 Honoured and bless'd be the ever-green line!
 Long may the tree in his banner that glances, 400
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,

Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every highland glen, 405
 Sends our shout back agen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Ours is no saplin, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade ;
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
 mountain, 410
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow ;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then, 415
 Echo his praise agen.
 “ Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Banochar's groans to our slogan replied ;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin, 420
 And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe ;
 Lennox and Leven-glen, 425
 Shake when they hear agen,
 “ Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Row, vassals row, for the pride of the Highlands !
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine !
 O ! that the rosebud that graces yon islands, 430
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine !
 O that some seedling gem
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honoured and bless'd in their shadow might grow !
 Loud should Clan-Alpine then 435
 Ring from her deepest glen,
 “ Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand ;
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew, 440
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back, with shrill acclaim,
 And chorus wild, the chieftain's name ;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
 The darling passion of his heart, 445
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land :
 " Come, loiterer, come ! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreath a victor's brow ? "
 Reluctantly and slow the maid 450
 Th' unwelcome summoning obeyed,
 And, when a distant bugle rung,
 In the mid-path aside she sprung :—
 " List, Allan-bane ! From main-land east,
 I hear my father's signal blast ; 455
 Be ours," she cried, " the skiff to guide,
 And waft him from the mountain side."
 Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
 She darted to her shallop light,
 And eagerly while Roderick scanned, 460
 For her dear form, his mother's band,
 The islet far behind her lay,
 And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
 With less of earth in them than heaven ; 46
 And if there be a human tear
 From passion's dross refined and clear,
 A tear so limpid and so meek,
 It would not stain an angel's cheek,
 'Tis that which pious fathers shed 470
 Upon a duteous daughter's head !
 And as the Douglas to his breast
 His darling Ellen closely pressed,

Such holy drops her tresses steep'd
 Though 'twas a hero's eye that weep'd. 475
 Nor, while on Ellen's faltering tongue
 Her filial welcomes crowd'd hung,
 Marked she that fear (affection's proof)
 Still held a graceful youth aloof;
 No! not till Douglas nam'd his name, 480
 Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
 Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
 His master piteously he eyed,
 Then gazed upon the chieftain's pride, 485
 Then dashed, with hasty hand, away
 From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
 And Douglas, as his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said
 "Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy 490
 In my poor follower's glistening eye?
 I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,
 "When in my praise he led the lay
 O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
 While many a minstrel answered loud, 95
 When Percy's Norman pennon, won
 In bloody field, before me shone,
 And twice ten knights, the least a name
 As mighty as yon chief may claim,
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came; 500
 Yet, trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
 Though the waned crescent owned my might,
 And in my train trooped lord and knight,
 Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays, 505
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true,
 Tho' ought my better fortunes knew, 510

Forgive, my friend, a father's boast
O! it out-beggars all I lost!"—

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
The brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared, 515
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shamefaced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid; 520
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly,
And trust, while in such guise she stood, 525
Like fabled Goddess of the Wood
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale; 530
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XV.

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Grame:
The belted plaid and tartan hose 535
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue;
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy; 540
Each pass, by mountain, lake and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Monteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear, 545

Outstripped in speed the mountaineer ;
 Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
 And not a sob his toil confess ;
 His form accorded with a mind,
 Lively and ardent, frank and kind ; 550
 A blither heart, till Ellen came,
 Did never love nor sorrow tame ;
 It danced as lightsome in his breast,
 As played the feather on his crest.
 Yet friends, who nearest know the youth, 555
 His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
 And bards, who saw his features bold,
 When kindled by the tales of old ;
 Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
 Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown, 560
 Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
 But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
 And, " O my sire ! " did Ellen say,
 " Why urge thy chase so far astray ? 565
 And why so late returned ? And why " —
 The rest was in her speaking eye.
 " My child, the chase I follow far,
 'Tis mimicry of noble war,
 And with that gallant pastime 'reft 570
 Were all of Douglas I have left.
 I met young Malcolm as I strayed
 Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
 Nor strayed I safe ; for, all around,
 Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground 575
 This youth, though still a royal ward,
 Risked life and land to be my guard,
 And through the passes of the wood
 Guided my steps, not unpursued ;
 And Roderick shall his welcome make, 580
 Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
 Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen
 Nor peril ought for me agen." —

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
 Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme, 52
 Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
 Failed aught in hospitality.
 In talk and sport they whiled away
 The morning of that summer day;
 But at high noon a courier light 590
 Held secret parley with the knight,
 Whose moody aspect soon declared,
 That evil were the news he heard.
 Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
 Yet was the evening banquet made, 595
 Ere he assembled, round the flame
 His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
 And Ellen, too; then cast around
 His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
 As studying phrase that might avail 600
 Best to convey unpleasant tale.
 Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
 Then raised his haughty brow, and said:

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
 Nor my plain temper, glozing words. 605
 Kinsman and father,—if such name
 Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
 Mine honoured mother; Ellen—why,
 My cousin, turn away thine eye?
 And Græme; in whom I hope to know 610
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,
 When age shall give thee thy command
 And leading in thy native land:—
 List all!—the King's vindictive pride
 Boasts to have tamed the Border-side, 615
 Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
 To share their monarch's slyvan game,
 Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
 And when the banquet they prepared!

And wide their loyal portals flung, 620
 O'er their own gateway struggling hung;
 Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
 From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed
 Where the lone streams of Ettricke glide,
 And from the silver Teviot's side; 625
 The dales, where martial clans did ride,
 Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
 This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
 So faithless and so ruthless known,
 Now hither comes; his end the same, 630
 The same pretext of sylvan game,
 What grace for Highland chiefs judge ye,
 By fate of Border chivalry.
 Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
 Douglas, thy stately form was seen. 635
 This by espial sure I knew:
 Your counsel in the streight I show."—

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
 Sought comfort in each other's eye,
 Then turned their ghastly look, each one, 640
 This to her sire, that to her son.
 The hasty colour went and came
 In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme:
 But from his glance it well appeared,
 'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;— 645
 While sorrowful, but undismay'd,
 The Douglas thus his counsel said:
 "Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
 It may but thunder and pass o'er;
 Nor will I here remain an hour, 650
 To draw the lightning on thy bower;
 For well thou know'st, at this gray head
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped;
 For thee, who, at thy King's command,
 Canst aid him with a gallant band, 655
 Submission, homage, humbled pride,
 Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.

Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
 Ellen and I will seek, apart,
 The refuge of some forest cell ; 660
 There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
 Till on the mountain and the moor
 The stern pursuit be passed and o'er."—

XXX.

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
 "So help me, heaven, and my good blade! 665
 No, never! Blasted be yon pine,
 My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
 If from its shade in danger part
 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
 Hear my blunt speech; grant me this maid 670
 To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
 To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
 Will friends and allies flock enow;
 Like cause of doubt, distrust and grief,
 Will bind to us each western chief. 675
 When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
 The links of Forth shall hear the knell,
 The guards shall start in Stirling porch;
 And when I light the nuptial torch,
 A thousand villages in flames 680
 Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
 —Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
 And, mother, cease these signs I pray;
 I meant not all my heat might say.—
 Small need of inroad, or of fight, 685
 When the sage Douglas may unite
 Each mountain clan in friendly band,
 To guard the passes of their land,
 Till the foiled King, from pathless glen,
 Shall bootless turn him home agen." 690

XXXI.

There are, who have, at midnight hour,
 In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,

And, on the verge that beetl'd o'er
 The ocean tide's incessant roar,
 Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream, 695
 Till wakened by the morning beam ;
 When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
 Such startler cast his glance below,
 And saw unmeasured depth around,
 And heard unintermitted sound, 700
 And thought the battled fence so frail,
 It waved like cobweb in the gale ;—
 Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
 Did he not desperate impulse feel,
 Headlong to plunge himself below, 705
 And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
 Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
 As sudden ruin yawned around,
 By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
 Still for the Douglas fearing most, 710
 Could scarcely the desperate thought withstand
 To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
 In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
 And eager rose to speak—but ere 715
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
 Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
 Where death seemed combating with life :
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
 One instant rushed the throbbing blood, 720
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
 Left its domain as wan as clay.
 " Roderick, enough ! enough ! " he cried,
 " My daughter cannot be thy bride :
 Not that the blush to wooer dear, 725
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear ;
 It may not be,—forgive her chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief ;
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear ; 730

'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand ;
 I see him yet, the princely boy !
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy ;
 I love him still, despite my wrongs, 735
 By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues,
 O seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined !"—

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode :
 The waving of his tartans broad, 740
 And darkened brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seemed by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill demon of the night,
 Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway 745
 Upon the 'nighted pilgrim's way :
 But, unrequited Love ! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
 At length the hand of Douglas wrung, 750
 While eyes, that mocked at tears before,
 With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long cherished hope
 Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud 755
 Convulsive heaved its chequered shroud,
 While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.
 The son's despair, the mother's look
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook ; 760
 She rose, and to her side there came,
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark and low, 765

To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst in fierce jealousy, to air,
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid : 770
 " Back, beardless boy ! " he sternly said,
 " Back, minion ! hold'st thou thus at naught
 The lesson I so lately taught ?
 This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
 Thank you for punishment delayed." 775
 Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Grame.
 " Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its chieftain safety, save his sword ! "—
 Thus as they strove, their desperate hand 780
 Griped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength :—Chieftains, forego !
 I hold the first who strikes, my foe.— 785
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar !
 What ! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
 His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
 Of such dishonourable broil ! "—
 Sullen and slowly, they unclasp, 790
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung, 759
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
 As faltered through terrific dream.
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veiled his wrath in scornful word.
 " Rest safe till morning ; pity 'twere 800
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air !
 Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
 Roderick will keep the lake and fell,

Not lackey, with his free-born clan,
 The pageant pomp of earthly man. 805
 More would he of Chan-Alpine know,
 Thou can'st our strength and passes show.—
 Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came;
 "Give our safe conduct to the Græme."
 Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold, 810
 "Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
 The spot an angel deigned to grace,
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place:
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes. 815
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight, as in blaze of day,
 Though, with his boldest at his back,
 Ev'n Rhoderick Dhu beset the track.—
 Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay, 820
 Nought here of parting will I say,
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen.
 So secret, but we meet again.—
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"
 He said, and left the sylvan bower. 825

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the strand,
 (Such was the Douglas's command.)
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,
 The stern Sir Roderic deep had sworn,
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er 830
 Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
 Much were the peril to the Græme,
 From those who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
 Himself would row him to the strand. 835
 He gave his counsel to the wind.
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind.
 Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
 His ample plaid in tightened fold,
 And stripped his limbs to such array, 840
 As best might suit the watery way.

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt : " Farewell to thee,
 Pattern of old fidelity!"—
 The minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,—
 " O! could I point a place of rest! 845
 My sovereign holds in ward my land,
 My uncle leads my vassal band;
 To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade;
 Yet, if there be one faithful Græme, 850
 Who loves the chieftain of his name,
 Not long shall honoured Douglas dwell
 Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
 Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
 I may not give the rest to air!— 855
 Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
 Not the poor service of a boat,
 To waft me to yon mountain side."
 Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
 Bold o'er the flood his head he bore, 860
 And stoutly steered him from the shore;
 And Allan strained his anxious eye,
 Far 'mid the lake his form to spy,
 Darkening across each puny wave,
 To which the moon her silver gave, 865
 Fast as the cormorant could skim,
 The swimmer plied each active limb;
 Then, landing in the moonlight dell,
 Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
 The Minstrel heard the far halloo, 870
 And joyful from the shore withdrew.



NOTES.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

SIXTH CANTO.

These drew not for their fields the sword.

Canto 6, Stanza iii.

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants.

*Indifferent as to archer wight,
The Monarch gave the arrow bright.*

Canto 6, Stanza xxii.

The Douglas of the story is an imaginary person, a supposed uncle of the Earl of Angus.

Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp.

Canto 6, Stanza vi.

The jongleurs, or jugglers, as we learn from the elaborate work of the late Mr. Strutt, on the sports and pastimes of the People of England, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing.

That stirring air which peals on high.

Canto 6, Stanza xiv.

There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes, as to require to hear them on their death-bed.

Battle of Beal' an Duine.

Canto 6, Stanza xv.

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

*The Douglas like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer.*

Canto 2, Stanza xii.

The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages.

Maronnan's cell.

Canto 2, Stanza xiii.

The parish of Kilmarnock, at the eastern extremity of Loch-Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronoch, or Marnoch, or Maronen, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered. There is a fountain devoted to him in the same parish; but its virtues, like the merits of its patron, have fallen into oblivion.

Bracklin's thundering wave.

Canto 2, Stanza xiii.

This is a beautiful cascade made at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn, by a mountain stream called the Keltie, about a mile from the village of Callender, in Monteith.

For Tine-man forged by fairy love.

Canto 2, Stanza xv.

Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of *Tine-man*, because he *tired*, or lost, his followers in every battle he fought.

*Did self-unscabbarded foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.*

Canto 2, Stanza xv.

The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time.

The pibroch proud.

Canto 2, Stanza xvii.

The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover, in a well composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the "current of a heady fight."

Roderigh vich Alpine dhu, ho! ierce!

Canto 2, Stanza xix.

Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine. Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of

his clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia.

The best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.

Canto 2, Stanza xx.

The Lennox, as the district is called which encircles the lower extremity of Loch-Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighbouring district of Loch-Katrine.

— *The king's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the border side.*

Canto 2, Stanza xxviii.

In 1529, James V. made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers.

*What grace for Highland chiefs judge ye,
By fate of Border chivalry.*

Canto 2, Stanza xxviii.

James was, in fact, equally attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression in every part of his dominions.

*Rest safe till morning: pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air.*

Canto 2, Stanza xxxv.

Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander, that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter which could be thrown upon him.

— *His henchman came.*

Canto 2, Stanza xxxv.

This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready, upon all occasions to venture his life in defence of his master: and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived, and watches his conversation, to see if any one offends his patron.

END OF SECOND CANTO.

The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

CANTO III.

THE GATHERING.

TORONTO:

W. WARWICK, WELLINGTON STREET EAST.

1876.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO THIRD.

THE GATHERING.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be ! 6
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight ! Time rolls his cease-
less course.

Yet live there still who can remember well, 10
How when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew ;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound, 15
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor round.

II.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue ; 20

Mildly and soft the western breeze
 Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
 And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
 Trembled but dimpled not for joy ;
 The mountain-shadows on her breast 25
 Were neither broken nor at rest ;
 In bright uncertainty they lie,
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
 The water-lily to the light
 Her chalice reared of silver bright ; 30
 The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
 Begemmed with dewdrops, led her fawn ;
 The gray mist left the mountain side,
 The torrent shewed its glistening pride ;
 Invisible in flecked sky, 35
 The lark sent down her revelry ;
 The blackbird and the speckled thrush
 Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
 In answer cooed the cushat dove
 Her notes of peace, and rest, and love. 40

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
 Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
 With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
 Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
 And eyed the rising sun, and laid 45
 His hand on his impatient blade.
 Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
 Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
 With deep and deathful meaning fraught ;
 For such Antiquity had taught 50
 Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
 The Cross of Fire should take its road.
 The shrinking band stood oft aghast
 At the impatient glance he cast ;—
 Such glance the mountain eagle threw, 55
 As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
 She spread her dark sails on the wind,
 And, high in middle heaven reclined.

With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake. 60

IV.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke. 65
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair ;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic pennance bore. 70
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude. 75
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look ;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er. 80
The hallowed creed gave only worse
A deadlier emphasis of curse ;
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care,
The eager huntsman knew his bound, 85
And in mid chase called off his hound ;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,

Where scattered lay the bones of men,
 In some forgotten battle slain, 95
 And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
 It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
 To view such mockery of his art !
 The knot-grass fettered there the hand,
 Which once could burst an iron band ; 100
 Beneath the broad and ample bone,
 That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
 A feeble and a timorous guest,
 The field-fare framed her lowly nest ;
 There the slow blind-worm left his slime 105
 On the fleet limbs that mocked at time :
 And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
 Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
 For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
 Supplied the bonnet and the plume. 110
 All night, in this sad glen, the maid
 Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade ;
 —She said, no shepherd sought her side,
 No hunter's hand her snood untied,
 Yet ne'er again to braid her hair 115
 The virgin snood did Alice wear ;
 Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
 Her maiden girdle all too short,
 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
 Or holy church or blessed rite, 120
 But locked her secret in her breast,
 And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
 Was Brian from his infant years ;
 A moody and heart-broken boy, 125
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt with careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 To wood and stream his hap to wail, 130
 Till, frantic, he as truth received

What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire !
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate, 135
 The cloister oped her pitying gate ;
 In vain, the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page ;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind. 140
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells.
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride ;
 Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung, 145
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the Spectre's child. 150
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the river Demon rise ;
 The mountain mist took form and limb, 155
 Of noontide hag, or goblin grim ;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead ;
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death : 160
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.
 One lingering sympathy of mind
 Still bound him to the mortal kind ;
 The only parent he could claim 165
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
 Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
 The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream ;
 Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,

Of charging steeds, careering fast 170
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,
 Where mortal horsemen ne'er might ride ;
 The thunderbolt had split the pine—
 All augured ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to shew 175
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
 As bade the chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared ; and from the rock 180
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
 Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb, 185
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
 A slender crosslet formed with care,
 A cubit's length in measure due :
 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew, 190
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
 Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross, thus formed, he held on high. 195
 With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke.

IX.

Woe to the clansman, who shall view 200
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low !
 Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,

He ne'er shall mingle with their dust, 205
 But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just

Shall doom him wrath and woe.'

He paused; the word the vassals took, 210
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly stook;

And first in murmur low,

Then, like the billow in his course, 215
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his mustered force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,

'Woe to the traitor, woe!'

Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew, 220
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle screamed afar—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
 The monk resumed his muttered spell : 225
 Dismal and low its accents came,
 The while he scathed the Cross with flame,
 And the few words that reached the air,
 Although the holiest name was there,
 Had more of blasphemy than prayer.

But when he shook above the crowd 230
 Its kindled points, he spoke aloud :

'Woe to the wretch, who fails to rear

At this dread sign the ready spear!

For, as the flames this symbol sear,
 His home, the refuge of his fear, 235

A kindred fate shall know.

Far o'er its roof the volumed flame

— Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
 While maids and matrons on his name
 Shall call down wretchedness and shame, 240

And infamy and woe.'

Then rose the cry of females, shrill

As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
 Denouncing misery and ill,
 Mingled with childhood's babbling trill 245
 Of curses stammered slow ;
 Answering, with imprecation dread,
 ' Sunk be his home in embers red !
 And cursed be the meanest shed
 That e'er shall hide the houseless head 250
 We doom to want and woe !'
 A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
 Coir-Uriskin, thy Goblin cave !
 And the gray pass where birches wave,
 On Beala-nam-bo. 255

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
 And hard his labouring breath he drew,
 While with set teeth and clenched hand,
 And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
 He meditated curse more dread, 260
 And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
 Who, summoned to his Chieftain's aid,
 The signal saw and disobeyed.
 The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
 He quenched among the bubbling blood, 265
 And, as again the sign he reared,
 Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard :
 ' When flits this Cross from man to man,
 Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
 Burst be the ear that fails to heed ! 270
 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed !
 May ravens tear the careless eyes,
 Wolves make the coward heart their prize !
 As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
 So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth ! 275
 As dies in hissing gore the spark,
 Quench thou his light, Destruction dark !
 And be the grace to him denied,
 Bought by this sign to all beside !'

He ceased ; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen. 280

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took :
' Speed, Malise, speed ! ' he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave. 285
' The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed ! ' ”
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew ;
High stood the henchmen on the prow ; 290
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill ; 295
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed Malise, speed ! the dun-deer's hide 300
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed ! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest ; 305
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass ;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound :
The crag is high, the scaur is deep, 310
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap ;
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now ;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,

Stretch onward in thy fleet career ! 315
 The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
 Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
 Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
 With rivals in the mountain race ;
 But danger, death, and warrior deed, 320
 Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed !

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
 In arms the huts and hamlets rise ;
 From winding glen, from upland brown,
 They poured each hardy tenant down. 325
 Nor slack'd the messenger his pace ;
 He shewed the sign, he named the place,
 And, pressing forward like the wind,
 Left clamour and surprise behind.
 The fisherman forsook the strand, 330
 The swarthy smith took dirk and brand ;
 With changed cheer, the mower blithe
 Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe ;
 The herds without a keeper strayed,
 The plough was in mid-furrow staid, 335
 The falc'ner tossed his hawk away,
 The hunter left the stag at bay ;
 Prompt at the signal of alarms,
 Each son of Alpine rushed to arms ;
 So swept the tumult and affray 340
 Along the margin of Achray.
 Alas, thou lovely lake ! that e'er
 Thy banks should echo sounds of fear !
 The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
 So stilly on thy bosom deep, 345
 The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
 Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed ! the lake is past,
 Duncraggan's huts appear at last,

And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen, 350
 Half hidden in the copse so green :
 There mayst thou rest, thy labour done,
 Their Lord shall speed the signal on.—
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
 The henchman shot him down the way. 355
 —What woeful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase, 360
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
 Within the hall, where torches' ray
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear. 365
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why ;
 The village maids and matrons round
 The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

CORONACH.

He is gone on the mountain. 870
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font, reappearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow, 375
 But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!
 The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper 380
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest

But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest. 385

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain, 390
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou are gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed, 395
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread, 400
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast: unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall; 405
Before the dead man's bier he stood;
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen speed!

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line, 410
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony, 415
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu—

Alas !' she sobbed—'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son !'
One look he cast upon the bier, 420
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed, 425
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear ;
And when she marked the henchman's eye, 430
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
'Kinsman,' she said, 'his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on ;
The oak has fallen—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now, 435
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.—
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head ! 440
Let babes and women wail the dead.'
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe, with hurried hand ; 445
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force ; 450
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew ; 455

The tear that gathered in his eye
 He left the mountain breeze to dry ;
 Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
 Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
 That graced the sable strath with green, 460
 The chapel of Saint Bride was seen,
 Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
 But Angus paused not on the edge ;
 Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
 Though reeled his sympathetic eye, 465
 He dashed amid the torrent's roar :
 His right hand high the crosslet bore,
 His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
 And stay his footing in the tide.
 He stumbled twice—the foam splashed high, 470
 With hoarser swell the stream raced by ;
 And had he fallen—for ever there,
 Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir !
 But still, as if in parting life,
 Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife, 475
 Until the opposing bank he gained,
 And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
 Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride,
 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave 480
 To Norman, heir of Armandave,
 And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
 The bridal now resumed their march.
 In rude, but glad procession, came
 Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame ; 485
 And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
 Which snooded maiden would not hear :
 And children, that, unwitting why,
 Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry ;
 And minstrels that in measures vied 490
 Before the young and bonny bride,
 Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
 The tear and blush of morning rose.

With virgin step, and bashful hand,
 She held the 'kerchief's snowy band ; 495
 The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
 Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
 And the glad mother in her ear
 Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard gate? 500
 The messenger of fear and fate!
 Haste in his hurried accent lies,
 And grief is swimming in his eyes.
 All dripping from the recent flood,
 Panting and travel-soiled he stood, 505
 The fatal sign of fire and sword
 Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
 ' The muster-place is Lanrick mead ;
 Speed forth the signal ! Norman, speed !'
 And must he change so soon the hand, 510
 Just linked to his by holy band,
 For the fell Cross of blood and brand ?
 And must the day, so blithe that rose,
 And promised rapture in the close,
 Before its setting hour, divide 515
 The bridegroom from the plighted bride ?
 O fatal doom !—it must ! it must !
 Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
 Her summons dread, brook no delay ;
 Stretch to the race—away ! away ! 520

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
 And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
 Until he saw the starting tear
 Speak woe he might not stop to cheer ;
 Then, trusting not a second look, 525
 In haste he sped him up the brook,
 Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
 Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.

—What in the racer's bosom stirred?
 The sickening pang of hope deferred, 530
 And memory, with a torturing train
 Of all his morning visions vain.
 Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers, 535
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
 And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honours on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast. 540
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve, and feeling strong,
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed, 545
 The bracken curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid, 550
 My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
 It will not waken me, Mary!
 I may not, dare not, fancy now,
 The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
 I dare not think upon thy vow, 555
 And all it promised me, Mary.
 No fond regret must Norman know;
 When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
 His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary. 560
 A time will come with feeling fraught,
 For, if I fall in battle fought,
 Thy hapless lover's dying thought
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.

And if returned from conquered foes, 565
 How blithly will the evening close,
 How sweet the linnet sing repose,
 To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
 Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze, 570
 Rushing, in conflagration strong,
 Thy deep ravines and dells along,
 Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
 And reddening the dark lakes below;
 Nor faster speeds it, nor so far, 575
 As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
 The signal roused to martial coil,
 The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
 Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source,
 Alarmed Balvaig, thy swampy course; 580
 Thence southward turned its rapid road
 Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
 Till rose in arms each man might claim
 A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
 From the gray sire whose trembling hand 585
 Could hardly buckle on his brand,
 To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,
 Mustered its little horde of men, 590
 That met as torrents from the height
 In Highland dales their streams unite,
 Still gathering as they pour along,
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
 Till at the rendezvous they stood 595
 By hundreds, prompt for blows and blood:
 Each trained to arms since life began,
 Owing no tie but to his clan,
 No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
 No law, but Roderick Dhu's command. 600

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
 Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
 And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
 To view the frontiers of Menteith.
 All backward came with news of truce; 605
 Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
 In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch Con; 610
 All soemed at peace.—Now, wot ye why
 The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,
 This western frontier scanned with care?—
 In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
 A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
 For Douglas, to his promise true,
 That morning from the isle withdrew,
 And in a deep sequestered dell
 Had sought a low and lonely cell. 620
 By many a bard, in celtic tongue,
 Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
 A softer name the Saxons gave,
 And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat, 625
 As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
 The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
 Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
 Its trench had staid full many a rock,
 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock 630
 From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
 And here, in random ruin piled,
 They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
 And formed the rugged silvan grot.
 The oak and birch, with mingled shade, 635
 At noontide there a twilight made,

Unless when short and sudden shone
 Some straggling beam on cliff or stone.
 With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
 Gains on thy depth, Futurity. 640
 No murmur waked the solemn still,
 Save tinkling of a fountain rill,
 But when the wind chafed with the lake,
 A sullen sound would upward break,
 With dashing hollow voice, that spoke 645
 The incessant war of wave and rock.
 Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
 Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
 From such a den the wolf had sprung.
 In such the wild-cat leaves her young : 650
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
 Sought for a space their safety there.
 Gray Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarred the spot to vulgar tread ;
 For there, she said, did fays resort, 655
 And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
 By moonlight treat their mystic maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong, 660
 When Roderick, with a chosen few,
 Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
 Above the Goblin-cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo ;
 The prompt retainers speed before, 665
 To launch the shallop from the shore,
 For cross Loch Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.
 Yet lags the chief in musing mind, 670
 Unwonted sight, his men behind.
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 A'one attended on his lord ;
 The rest their way through thickets break,

And soon awake him by the lake. 675
 It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighbouring height,
 By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
 For strength and stature, from the clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man, 680
 As even afar might well be seen,
 By their proud step and martial mien.
 Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
 Their targets gleam, as by the boat
 A wild and warlike group they stand, 685
 That well became such mountain strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
 Was lingering on the craggy hill,
 Hard by where turned apart the road
 To Douglas's obscure abode. 690
 It was but with that dawning morn,
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn,
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
 But he who stems a stream with sand, 695
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,
 Has yet a harder task to prove—
 By firm resolve to conquer love!
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 Still hovering near his treasure lost; 700
 For though his haughty heart deny
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze 705
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,
 That wakes its measure slow and high
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy. 710
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings,

XXIX.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild, 715

Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast, and reviled—
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria! 730

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care, 735
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer.
And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn— 740
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,

'It is the last time—'tis the last,'
 He muttered thrice—'the last time e'er
 That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!' 750
 It was a goading thought—his stride
 Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
 Sullen he flung him in the boat,
 And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
 They landed in that silvery bay,
 And eastward held their hasty way, 755
 Till, with the latest beams of light,
 The band arrived on Lanrick height,
 Where mustered, in the vale below,
 Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made, 760
 Some sate, some stood, some slowly strayed;
 But most, with mantles folded round,
 Were crouched to rest upon the ground,
 Scarce to be known by curious eye,
 From the deep heather where they lie, 765
 So well was matched the tartan screen
 With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
 Unless where, here and there, a blade,
 Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
 Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade. 770
 But when, advancing through the gloom,
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
 Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell 775
 Three times returned the martial yell;
 It died upon Bochastle's plain,
 And silence claimed her evening reign.

NOTES

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

THIRD CANTO.

And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round,
Canto 3, Stanza i.

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Craan Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy.

*Yet ne'er again, to braid her hair,
The virgin snood did Alice wear.*

Canto 3, Stanza v.

The *snood*, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or *coif*, when she passed by marriage, into the matron state.

The fatal Ben-shie's boding scream.

Canto 3, Stanza viii.

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in prosperity, and intimated, by their wailings, any approaching disaster. That of Grant was called *May Moullach*, and appeared in the form of a girl who had her arm covered with hair.

*Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast.*

Canto 3, Stanza vii.

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text, is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy

*Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave. ;*

Canto 3, Stanza viii.

Inch-Cailliach, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch-Lomond.

—*The dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.*

Canto 3, Stanza xiii.

The present *brogue* of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water: for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of the question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of the undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards, a circumstance which procured for the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *Red-shanks*.

The dismal Coronach.

Canto 3, Stanza xiv.

The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, like the *Ululatus* of the Romans, and the *Ululoo* of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend.

*Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.*

Canto 3, Stanza xix.

A glance at the provincial map of Perthshire, or at any large map of Scotland, will trace the progress of the signal through the small district of lakes and mountains, which, in exercise of my poetical privilege, I have subjected to the imaginary chieftain; and which, at the period of my romance, was really occupied by a clan who claimed a descent from Alpine, a clan the most unfortunate, and most persecuted, but neither the least distinguished, less powerful, or least brave, of the tribes of the Gael.

*Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze.*

Canto 3, Stanza xxiv.

It may be necessary to inform the southern reader, that the heath on the Scottish moor-lands is often set fire to, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced in room of the tough old heather plants.

—*By his Chieftain's hand.*

Canto 3, Stanza xxiv.

The deep and implicit respect paid by the Highland clansmen to their chief, rendered this both a common and a solemn oath.

—*Coir-nan Uriskin.*

Canto 3, Stanza xxv.

This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Ben-venue.

—*The wild pass of Beal-nam-Bo.*

Canto 3, Stanza xxvii.

Bealach-nam-Bo, or the pass of cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with ancient birch-trees. The whole composes the most sublime piece of scenery that imagination can conceive.

*A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord.*

Canto 3, Stanza xxvii.

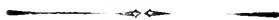
A Highland chief being as absolute in his patriarchal authority as any prince, had a corresponding number of officers attached to his person.

The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

CANTO IV.

THE PROPHECY.



TORONTO:

W. WARWICK, WELLINGTON STREET EAST.

1876.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE PROPHECY.

I.

'THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears :
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears, 5
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years !—
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung, 10
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
A wakeful sentenel he stood. 15
Hark !—on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
'Stand, or thou diest ;—What, Malise ?—soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I know 20
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe, ~

(For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 Where sleeps the Chief?' the henchman said.
 'Apart, in yonder misty glade; 25
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide.'—
 Then called a slumberer by his side,
 And stirred him with his slakened bow—
 'Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
 We seek the Chieftain; on the track, 30
 Keep eagle watch till I come back.'

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
 'What of the foemen?' Norman said.—
 'Varying reports from near and far;
 This certain—that a band of war 35
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command, to march from Doune;
 King James, the while, with princely powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud 40
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide 45
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?'—
 'What! know ye not that Roderick's care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man 50
 Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,
 But all beside the islet moor,
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?'—

IV.

'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan 55
 Bespeaks the father of his clan.

But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
 Apart from all his followers true?—
 ‘It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried, 60
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duncraggan’s milk-white bull they slew.’— 65

MALISE.

‘Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glowed like fiery spark; 70
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal ’maha.
 But steep and flinty was the road, 75
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman’s goad,
 And when we came to Dennan’s Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow.’—

V.

NORMAN.

‘That bull was slain: his reeking hide
 They stretched the cataract beside, 80
 Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero’s Targe.
 Couched on a shelf beneath its brink, 85
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray.
 Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,

The wizard waits prophetic dream. 90
 Nor distant rests the Chief ;—but hush !
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost, 95
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host ?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,'
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?'

MALISE.

—'Peace! peace! to other than to me, 100
 Thy words were evil augury ;
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell.
 Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell. 105
 The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
 Together they descend the brow.'

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word :
 'Roderick! it is a fearful strife, 110
 For man endowed with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance— 115
 'Tis hard for such to view, unfurled,
 The curtain of the future world.
 Yet, witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn, 120
 This for my Chieftain have I borne !
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch:
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch ;
 No mortal man—save he, who, bred

Between the living and the dead, 125
 Is gifted beyond nature's law—
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.
 At length the fateful answer came,
 In characters of living flame !
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll, 130
 But borne and branded on my soul ;—
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'—

VII.

'Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care !
 Good is thine augury, and fair. 135
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow :
 A spy has sought my land this morn— 140
 No eve shall witness his return !
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south ;
 Red Murdock, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside, 145
 Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
 He light on those shall bring him down.
 —But see, who comes his news to shew ;
 Malise ! what tidings of the foe ?—

VIII.

'At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive, 150
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And marked the sable pale of Mar.'
 'By Alpine's soul, high tidings those !
 I love to hear of worthy foes. 155
 When move they on ?—' To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune.'—
 'Then shall it see a meeting stern !—
 But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn

Nought of the friendly clans of Earn ? 160
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side,
 Thou couldst not ?—well ! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen ;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight, 165
 All in our maids and matron's sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire—
 Lover for maid beloved !—But why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye ? 170
 Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear !
 A messenger of doubt and fear ?
 No ! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through 175
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu !
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
 Each to their post !—all know their charge.'
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance.
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance, 180
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
 —I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas ?—he is gone,
 And Ellen sits on the gray stone 185
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan ;
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.—
 ' He will return—Dear lady, trust !—
 With joy return ;—he will—he must. 190
 Well was it time to seek, afar,
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cowed by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats with many a light, 195
 Boating the live-long yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth

By the red streamers of the north ;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side, 200
 Like wild-ducks couching in the fen,
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care 205
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare ?—

X.

ELLEN.

' No, Allan, no ! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglass a parting blessing gave, 210
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose fixed on high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his ; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke, 215
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream 220
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught ?
 Oh no ! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth—for Roderick too— 225
 (Let me be just) that friend so true ;
 In danger both, and in our cause !
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 " If not on earth, we meet in heaven ! " 230
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie, and make me known ?

Alas ! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friend's safety with his own ;— 235
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son !—

XI.

' Nay, lovely Ellen !—dearest, nay !
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane 240
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe ; and for the Græme—
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name !—
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you. 245
 When did my gifted dream beguile ?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching woe !
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear ; 250
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot !
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
 Of such a wondrous tale I know—
 Dear lady, change that look of woe. 255
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.'—

ELLEN.

' Well, be it as thou wilt ; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear.'
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart. 260

XII.

BALLAD.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,

When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry.
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

' O Alice Brand, my native land 265
Is lost for love of you
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

' O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'Twas all for thine eyes so blue, 270
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

' Now must I teach to hew the beech,
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed, 275
And stakes to fence our cave.

' And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must sheer from the slaughtered deer
To keep the cold away.'— 280

' O Richard ! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance ;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

' If pall and vair no more I wear, 285
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

' And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land, 290
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.'

XIII.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood.
 So blithe Lady Alice is singing ;
 On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side, 295
 Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
 Who wonned within the hill—
 Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
 His voice was ghostly shrill. 300

' Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
 Our moonlight circle's screen ?
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen ?
 Or who may dare on wold to wear 305
 The faries' fatal green ?

' Up, Urgan, up ! to yon mortal hie,
 For thou wert christened man ;
 For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
 For muttered word or ban. 310

' Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
 The curse of the sleepless eye ;
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
 Nor yet find leave to die.'

XIV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood, 315
 Though the birds have stilled their singing ;
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is faggots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
 Before Lord Richard stands, 320

And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
 'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
 'That is made with bloody hands.'

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear— 325
 'And if there's blood upon his hand,
 'Tis but the blood of deer'—

'Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
 It cleaves unto his hand,
 The stain of thine own kindly blood, 330
 The blood of Ethert Brand.'

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign—
 'And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
 A spotless hand is mine. 335

'And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
 By Him whom Demons fear,
 To shew us whence thou art thyself,
 And what thine errand here?'

XV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

' 'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land, 340
 When fairy birds are singing,
 When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
 With bit and bridle ringing :

' And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
 But all is glistening show, 345
 Like the idle gleam that December's beam
 Can dart on ice and snow.

' And fading, like that varied gleam.
 Is our inconstant shape,
 Who now like knight and lady seem, 350
 And now like dwarf and ape.

‘It was between the night and day,
 When the Fairy King has power,
 That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
 And, ’twixt life and death, was snatched away
 To the joyless Elfin bower. 356

‘But wist I of a woman bold,
 Who thrice my brow durst sign,
 I might regain my mortal mold,
 As fair a form as thine.’ 360

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
 That lady was so brave ;
 The fouler grew his goblin hue,
 The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold ; 365
 He rose beneath her hand
 The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
 Her brother, Ethert Brand !

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing, 370
 But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray
 When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the Mfnstrel sounds were staid,
 A stranger climbed the steepy glade ;
 His martial step, his stately mein, 375
 His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
 ’Tis Snowdown’s Knight, ’tis James Fitz-James.
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,
 Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream : 380
 ‘O stranger ! in such hour of fear,
 What evil hap has brought thee here ?’—
 ‘An evil hap how can it be,
 That bids me look again on thee ?
 By promise bound, my former guide 385

Met me betimes this morning tide,
 And marshalled, over bank and bourne,
 The happy path of my return.'—
 'The happy path!—what! said he nought
 Of war, of battle to be fought, 390
 Of guarded pass?'—'No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe.'—
 'O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
 —Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure 395
 That he will guide the stranger sure!—
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here.'— 400

XVII.

'Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honour's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance, 405
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild,
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war. 410
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower'—
 'O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art, 415
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track: 420
 And how, O how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—

Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame, 425
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.— 430
 Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
 If yet he is!—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart; 435
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain,
 But here he knew and felt them vain. 440
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony, 445
 As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffered to attend her side, 450
 As brother would a sister guide.—
 'O! little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.' 455
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
 He paused, and turned, and came again. 460

XIX.

'Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave, 465
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,
 Whose castle is his helm and shield, 470
 His lordship the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither reck of state nor land?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
 Each guard and usher knows the sign.
 Seek thou the king without delay;
 This signet shall secure thy way;
 And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
 As ransom of his pledge to me.'
 He placed the golden circlet on, 480
 Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
 The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
 So hasily Fitz-James shot past.
 He joined his guide, and wending down
 The ridges of the mountain brown, 485
 Across the stream they took their way,
 That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
 Sudden his guide whooped loud and high— 490
 'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?'—
 He stammered forth—'I shout to scare
 Yon raven from his dainty fare.'
 He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
 His own brave steed:—'Ah, gallant gray! 495
 For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well

We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
 Murdoch, move first—but silently ;
 Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die !'
 Jealous and sullen on they fared, 500
 Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
 Around a precipice's edge,
 When lo ! a wasted female form,
 Blighted by wrath of sun and storm, 505
 In tattered weeds and wild array,
 Stood on a cliff beside the way,
 And glancing round her restless eye,
 Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
 Seemed nought to mark, yet all to spy. 510
 Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom ;
 With gesture wild she waved a plume
 Of feathers, which the eagles fling
 To crag and cliff from dusky wing ;
 Such spoils her desperate step had sought, 515
 Where scarce was footing for the goat.
 The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shrieked till all the rocks replied ;
 As loud she laughed when near they drew,
 For then the Lowland garb she knew ; 520
 And then her hands she wildly wrung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung—
 She sung !—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime ;
 And now, though strained and roughened, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill. 526

XXII.

SONG.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warped and wrung—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,

I cannot pray in Highland tongue. 530
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devan's tides,
 So sweetly would I rest, and pray
 That Heaven would close my wintry day.

'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid, 535
 They made me to the church repair;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there.
 But woe betide the cruel guile,
 That drowned in blood the morning smile! 540
 And woe betide the fairy dream!
 I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

'Who is this maid? what means her lay?
 She hovers o'er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle gray, 545
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.'—
 'Tis Blanche of Devan,' Murdoch said,
 'A crazed and captive Lowland maid.'
 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride, 550
 When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,
 And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.— 555
 Hence, brain-sick fool!'—He raised his bow:—
 'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
 I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
 As ever peasant pitched a bar!'
 'Thanks, champion, thanks!' the Maniac cried,
 And pressed her to Fitz-James's side. 561
 'See the gray pennons I prepare,
 To seek my true-love through the air!
 I will not lend that savage groom,
 To break his fall, one downy plume! 565
 No!—deep amid disjointed stones,

The wolves shall batten on his bones,
 And then shall his detested plaid,
 By bush and brier in mid air staid,
 Wave forth a banner fair and free, 570
 Meet signal for their revelry,—

XXIV.

‘Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!’—
 ‘O! thou look’st kindly, and I will.—
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
 But still it loves the Lincoln green; 575
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
 Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

‘For O my sweet William was forester true,
 He stole poor Blanche’s heart away!
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue, 580
 And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

‘It was not that I meant to tell . . .
 But thou art wise, and guessest well.’
 Then, in a low and broken tone,
 And hurried note, the song went on. 585
 Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
 She fixed her apprehensive eye;
 Then turned it on the Knight, and then
 Her look glanced wildly o’er the glen.

XXV.

‘The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,
 Ever sing merrily, merrily; 591
 The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
 Hunters live so cheerily.

‘It was a stag, a stag of ten,
 Bearing his branches sturdily; 595
 He came stately down the glen,
 Ever sing hardily, hardily.

‘ It was there he met with a wounded doe,
 She was bleeding deathfully ;
 She warned him of the toils below,
 O, so faithfully, faithfully !

600

‘ He had an eye, and he could heed,
 Ever sing warily, warily ;
 He had a foot, and he could speed—
 Hunters watch so narrowly.’

605

XXVI.

Fitz-James’s mind was passion-tossed,
 When Ellen’s hints and fears were lost ;
 But Murdoch’s shout suspicion wrought,
 And Blanche’s song conviction brought.—
 Not like a stag that spies the snare,
 But lion of the hunt aware,
 He waved at once his blade on high,
 ‘ Disclose thy treachery, or die !’
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
 But in his race his bow he drew.
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James’s crest,
 And thrilled in Blanche’s faded breast—
 Murdoch of Alpine ! prove thy speed,
 For ne’er had Alpine’s son such need !
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
 The fierce avenger is behind !
 Fate judges of the rapid strife—
 The forfeit death—the prize is life !
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,
 Close couched upon the heathery moor ;
 Them could’st thou reach !—it may not be—
 Thine ambushed kin thou ne’er shalt see,
 The fiery Saxon gains on thee !
 —Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
 As lightning strikes the pine to dust ;
 With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
 Ere he can win his blade again.
 Bent o’er the fall’n, with falcon eye,
 He grimly smiled to see him die ;

610

615

620

625

630

Then slower wended back his way. 635
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee ;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed ; 640
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried—
' Stranger, it is in vain !' she cried.
' This hour of death has given me more 645
Of reason's power than years before ;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye, 650
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O ! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair !
It once was bright and clear as thine, 655
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn !—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave, 660
Till sun and wind shall bleach and stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God ! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light !—
O ! by thy knighthood's honoured sign, 665
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom, 670
Be thy heart hold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong !—

They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell.'

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James ; 676
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims,
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 ' God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief !' 680
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair ;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet-side :
 ' By Him, whose word is truth ! I swear, 685
 No other favour will I wear,
 Till this sad token I imbrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu !
 —But hark ! what means yon faint halloo ?
 The chase is up—but they shall know, 690
 The stag at bay's a dangerous foe.'
 Barred from the known but guarded way,
 Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
 And oft must change his desperate track,
 By stream and precipice turned back. 695
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
 From lack of food and loss of strength,
 He couched him in a thicket hoar,
 And thought his toils and perils o'er :—
 ' Of all my rash adventures past, 700
 This frantic feat must prove the last !
 Who o'er so mad but might have guessed,
 That all this Highland hornet's nest
 Would muster up in swarms so soon
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?— 705
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out—
 Hark, to the whistle and the shout !—
 If farther through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe :

I'll couch me here till evening gray,
Then darkling try my dangerous way.' 710

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell; 715
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to shew
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear awake, 720
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice, there,
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold,
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold. 725
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned. 730

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand—
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'—
'A stranger.'—'What dost thou require?'— 735
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'—
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?'—'No.'—
'Thou darrest not call thyself a foe?'— 740
'I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.'—
'Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,

Though space and law the stag we lend, 745
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
 Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapped or slain?
 Thus treacherous scouts—yet sure they lie,
 Who say thou camest a secret spy! 750
 ‘They do, by Heaven!—Come Roderick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,
 I write the falsehood on their crest.’—
 ‘If by the blaze I mark aright, 755
 Thou bear’st the belt and spur of Knight.’—
 ‘Then by these tokens mayst thou know
 Each proud oppressor’s mortal foe.’—
 ‘Enough, enough; sit down and share
 A soldier’s couch, a soldier’s fare.’ 760

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
 The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tended him like welcome guest, 765
 Then thus his further speech addressed:—
 ‘Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu,
 A clansman born, a kinsman true;
 Each word against his honour spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke; 770
 Yet more—upon my fate, ’tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid.
 It rests with me to wind my horn—
 Thou art with numbers overborne;
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand, 775
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
 But, not for clan, nor kindred cause,
 Will I depart from honour’s laws;
 To assail a wearied man were shame,
 And stranger is a holy name; 780
 Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
 In vain he never must require.

Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard, 786
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.—
'I take thy courtesy, by Heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!'— 790
'Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby.'
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side, 795
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.



NOTES.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

FORTH CANTO.

*The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.*

Canto 4, Stanza iv.

The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity.

*The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.*

Canto 4, Stanza iv.

I know not if it be worth observing, that this passage is taken almost literally from the mouth of an old Highland Kern, or Ketteran, as they were called. He used to narrate the merry doings of the good old time when he was a follower of Rob Roy Macgregor.

*—that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.*

Canto 4, Stanza v.

There is a rock so named in the forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuous cataract takes its course.

That, watching while the deer is broke.

Canto 4, Stanza v.

Everything belonging to the chase was a matter of solemnity among our ancestors, but nothing was more so than cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking*, the slaughtered stag.

*Which spills the foremost foeman's life,
The party conquers in the strife.*

Canto 4, Stanza vi.

Though this be in the text described as the response of the Taghairm, or Oracle of the **H**ide, it was of itself an augury frequently attended to.

Alice Brand.

Canto 4, Stanza xii.

This little fairy tale is founded upon a very curious Danish ballad, which occurs in the *KEMPE VISEN*, a collection of heroic songs, first published in 1591, and reprinted in 1695, inscribed by Anders Sofrensen, the collector and editor, to Sophia, Queen of Denmark.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King.

Canto 4, Stanza xiii.

The *Daoine Shi'*, or Men of peace, of the Highlanders, though not absolutely malevolent, are believed to be a peevish, repining race of beings, who, possessing themselves but a scanty portion of happiness, are supposed to envy mankind their more complete and substantial enjoyment. They are supposed to enjoy, in their subterraneous recesses, a sort of shadowy happiness,—a tinsel grandeur; which, however, they would willingly exchange for the more solid joys of mortality.

*Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle screen?*

Canto 4, Stanza xiii.

It has been already observed that fairies, if not positively malevolent, were capricious, and easily offended.

*Or who may dare on wold to wear,
The fairies' fatal green.*

Canto 4, Stanza xiii.

As the *Daoine Shi'*, or Men of Peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour.

For they wert christened man.

Canto 4, Stanza xiii.

The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power, a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction.

*And gaily shines the fairy land,
But all is glistening show.*

Canto 4, Stanza xv.

No fact respecting fairy land seems to be better ascertained than the fantastic and illusory nature of their apparent pleasure and splendour.

*—I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And 'twixt life and death it was snatched away
To the joyless elfin power.*

Canto 4, Stanza xv.

The subjects of fairy land were recruited from the regions of humanity by a sort of *crimping* system, which extended to adults as well as to infants. Many of those who were in this world supposed to have discharged the debt of nature, had only become denizens of the "Loude of Faery."

*Though space and law the stag we lend,
Whoever reck'd where, how, and when
The prowling fox was trapp'd and slain?*

Canto 4, Stanza xxx.

St. John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford.

—his *Highland cheer*,
The harden'd flesh of mountain deer.

Canto 4, Stanza xxxi.

The Scottish Highlanders, in former times, had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French, whom chance made acquainted with it.

END OF FOURTH CANTO.



The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

CANTO V.

THE COMBAT.



TORONTO:

W. WARWICK, WELLINGTON STREET EAST,

1876.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COMBAT.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain side;— 5
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow
of war.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen, 10
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by, 15
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael* around him threw

* The Scottish Highlander calls himself *Gael*, or *Gaul*, and terms the Lowlanders, *Sassenach*, or *Saxons*.

His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 And, true to promise, led the way, 20
 By thicket green and mountain gray ;
 A wildering path!—they winded now
 Along the precipice's brow,
 Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
 The windings of the Forth and Teith, 25
 And all the vales between that lie,
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky ;
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
 Gained not the length of horseman's lance,
 'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain 30
 Assistance from the hand to gain ;
 So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear! 35

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
 The hill sinks down upon the deep ;
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose ;
 Ever the hollow path twined on. 40
 Beneath steep bank and threatening stone ;
 A hundred men might hold the post
 With hardihood against a host ;
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak, 45
 With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
 And patches bright of bracken green,
 And heather black that waved so high,
 It held the copse in rivalry ;
 But where the lake slept deep and still, 50
 Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill ;
 And oft both path and hill were torn,
 Where wintry torrent down had borne,
 And heaped upon the cumbered land
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand. 55
 So toilsome was the road to trace,

The guide abating of his pace,
 Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
 And asked Fitz-James, by what strange cause
 He sought these wilds? traversed by few, 60
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

" Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
 Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
 Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
 " I dreamed not now to claim its aid. 65
 When here, but three days since, I came,
 Bewildered in pursuit of game,
 All seemed as peaceful and as still,
 As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
 Thy dangerous Chief was then afar, 70
 Nor soon expected back from war.
 Thus said, at least, my mountain guide,
 Though deep, perchance, the villain lied."
 " Yet why a second venture try?"
 " A warrior thou, and ask me why? 75
 Moves our free course by such fixed cause
 As gives the poor mechanic laws?
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day;
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide 80
 A knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
 A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
 The merry glance of mountain maid;
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone." 85

V.

" Thy secret keep, I urge thee not:—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye not of lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine raised by Mar?"
 "—No, by my word; of bands prepared 90
 To guard King James's sports I heard;

Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung." 95
 "Free be they flung! for we were loth
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
 Clan Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, Stranger, peaceful since you came, 100
 Bewildered in the mountain game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?"
 "Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
 Nought of the Chieftain, Roderick Dhu, 105
 Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
 Yet this alone might from his part 110
 Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lowered the Clansman's sable scowl;
 A space he paused, then sternly said,—
 "And heard'st thou why he drew his blade? 115
 Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
 What reck'd the Chieftain, if he stood
 On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is given, 120
 If it were in the court of heaven!"
 "Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
 Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
 While Albany, with feeble hand,
 Held borrowed truncheon of command, 125
 The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower
 Was stranger to respect and power.
 But then, thy Chieftain's robber-life!—
 Winning mean prey by causeless strife,

Wrenching from ruined lowland swain,
 His herds and harvest reared in vain—
 Methinks a soul like thine, should scorn
 The spoils from such foul foray borne." 130

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answered with disdainful smile,— 135
 " Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I marked thee send delighted eye,
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,
 Deep waving fields and pastures green, 140
 With gentle slopes and groves between :—
 These fertile plains, that softened vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael ;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land. 145
 Where dwell we now ! See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread,
 For fattened steer or household bread ;
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry, 150
 And well the mountain might reply—
 " To you as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore !
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the rest." 155
 Pent in the fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey ?
 Aye, by my soul !—While on yon plain 160
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain ;
 While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
 But one along yon river's maze,—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall with strong hand, redeem his share. 165
 Where lives the mountain chiefs who hold,
 That plundering Lowland field and fold

Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

VIII.

Answered Fitz-James,—“ And, if I sought, 170
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path way-laid,
My life given o'er to ambuscade?”
“ As of a need to rashness due :
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,— 175
I seek my hound, or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,
Free hadst thou been to come and go,
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy, 180
Hadst thou, unheard, being doomed to die,
Save to fulfill an augury,”—
“ Well, let it pass ; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow : 185
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride :
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace ; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand and bow, 190
As leader seeks his mortal foe !
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for th' appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band.”— 195

IX.

“ Have, then, thy wish !”—he whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill ;
Wild as the scream of the curfew,
From crag to crag the signal flew ;
Instant, through copse and heath, arose 200
Bonnets, and spears, and bended bows ;
On right, on left, above, below,

Sprung up at once the lurking foe ;
 From shingles gray their lances start,
 The bracken bush sends forth the dart, 205
 The rushes and the willow wand
 Are bristling into axe and brand,
 And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior armed for strife.
 That whistle garrison'd the glen 210
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given,
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood and still ; 215
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung, 220
 Upon the mountain side they hung.
 The mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benledi's living side,
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now? 225
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true ;
 And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"—

X.

Fitz-James was brave ;—Though to his heart
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start :
 He mann'd himself with dauntless air, 230
 Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before :—
 "Come one, come all ! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I."— 235
 Sir Roderick marked—and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foemen worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood—then waved his hand : 240

Down sunk the disappearing band ;
 Each warrior vanished where he stood,
 In broom and bracken, heath or wood ;
 Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
 In osiers pale and copses low ; 245
 It seemed as if their mother Earth
 Had swallowed up her warlike birth ;
 The wind's last breath had tossed in air,
 Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
 The next but swept the lone hill-side, 250
 Where heath and fern were waving wide ;
 The sun's last glance were glinted back,
 From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
 The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green, and cold gray stone. 255

XI.

Fitz-James looked round—yet scarce believed
 The witness that his sight received ;
 Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream ; 260
 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
 And to his look the Chief replied,
 “ Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
 But—doubt not aught from mine array.
 Thou art my guest ;—I pledged my word
 As far as Coilantogle ford : 265
 Nor would I call a clansman's brand
 For aid against one valient hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael ;
 So move we on ;—I only meant 270
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”—
 They moved :—I said Fitz-James was brave,
 As ever knight that belted glaive ; 275
 Yet dare not say, that now his blood
 Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
 As, following Roderick's stride he drew

That seeming lonesome pathway through,
 Which yet, by fearful proof was rife 280
 With lances that, to take his life
 Waited but signal from a guide,
 So late dishonoured and defied ;
 Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
 The vanished guardians of the ground, 285
 And still from copse and heather deep,
 Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
 And in the plover's shrilly strain,
 The signal whistle heard again ;
 Nor breathed he free till far behind 290
 The pass was left ; for then they wind
 Along a wild and level green,
 Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
 Nor rush, nor bush of broom was near,
 To hide a bonnet or a spear. 295

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
 And reached the torrent's sounding shore,
 Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
 From Vennachar in silver breaks,
 Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines 300
 On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
 Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
 Of yore her eagle wings unfuri'd.
 And here his course, the Chieftain staid,
 Threw down his target and his plaid, 305
 And to the Lowland warrior said :—
 " Bold Saxon ! to his promise just,
 Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust ;
 This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
 This head of a rebellious clan, 310
 Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward.
 Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard ;
 Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
 A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel ;
 See here, all vantageless I stand, 315
 Armed like thyself, with single brand ;

For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.”—

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—“I ne’er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade; 320
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:—
Can nought but blood our feud atone? 325
Are there no means”—“No, Stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead; 330
‘Who spills the foremost foeman’s life,
His party conquers in the strife.’”—
“Then, by my word,” the Saxon said,
“The riddle is already read;
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,— 335
There lies Red Murdock, stark and stiff;
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy.
Then yield to Fate, and not to me;
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe, 340
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand, 345
That aids thee now to guard thy land,”—

XIV.

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick’s eye,
“Soars thy presumption then so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu? 350
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate?”

Thou add'st but fuel to my hate :—
 My clansman's blood demands revenge.—
 Not yet prepared ?—By heaven, I change
 My thought, and hold thy valour light 355
 As that of some vain carpet-knight,
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,
 And whose best boast is but to wear
 A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
 "I thank thee, Roderick, for the word ! 360
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword ;
 For I have sworn this braid to stain
 In the best blood that warms thy vein.
 Now, truce, farewell ! and ruth, begone !
 Yet think not that by thee alone, 365
 Proud Chief ! can courtesy be shewn ;
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast. 370
 But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt--
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."—
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each looked to sun, and stream and plain 375
 As what they ne'er might see again :
 Then, foot, and point, and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw, 380
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dashed aside ;
 For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield ;
 He practised every pass and ward, 385
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard ;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintained unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,

And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood ; 390
 No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing floods the tartans dyed.
 Vierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And showered his blows like wintry rain ;
 And, as firm rock, or castle-roof, 395
 Against the winter shower is proof,
 The foe, invulnerable still,
 Foiled his wild rage by steady skill ;
 Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand, 400
 And, backwards borne upon the lea,
 Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or, by Him who made
 The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"—
 "Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy ! 405
 Let recreant yield, who fears to die."—
 Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung, 410
 Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
 And locked his arms his foeman round.—
 Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own !
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown !
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel, 415
 Through bars of brass and triple steel!—
 They tug, they strain! down, down, they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
 His knee was planted in his breast ; 420
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!—
 —But hate and fury ill supplied 425
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late th' advantage came,

To turn the odds of deadly game ;
 For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye. 430
 Down came the blow ! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp ;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close, 435
 But breathless all, Fitz James arose.

XXVII.

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeemed, unhop'd, from desp'rate strife ;
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appeared his last ; 440
 In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,—
 " Poor Blanche ! thy wrongs are dearly paid ;
 Yet with thy foe must die or live,
 The praise that Faith and Valour give."—
 With that he blew a bugle-note, 445
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbonnetted, and by the wave
 Sate down, his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet ; 450
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green ;
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
 By loosened rein, a saddled steed ;
 Each onward held his headlong course, 455
 And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
 With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
 —" Exclaim not, gallants ! question not.—
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight ; 460
 Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight :
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed. 465

The sun rides high ;—I must be boune
 To see the archer-game at noon ;
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea—
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XXVIII.

“ Stand, Bayard, stand ! ”—the steed obeyed 470
 With arching neck and bended head,
 And glancing eye and quiv’ring ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid, 475
 But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
 And lightly bounded from the plain,
 Turned on the horse his armed heel,
 And stirred his courage with the steel.
 Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480
 The rider sat erect and fair,
 Then, like a bolt from steel cross bow
 Forth launched, along the plain they go.
 They dashed that rapid torrent through,
 And up Carhonie’s hill they flew ; 485
 Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
 His merry men follow as they might.
 Along thy banks, swift Teith ! they ride,
 And in the race they mock thy tide ;
 Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490
 And Deanstown lies behind them cast ;
 They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
 They sink in distant woodland soon ;
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
 They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre ; 495
 They mark, just glance and disappear,
 The lofty brow of ancient Kier ;
 They bathe their coursers’ sweltering sides,
 Dark Forth ! amid thy sluggish tides,
 And on th’ opposing shore take ground, 500
 With splash, with scramble, and with bound.
 Light-hand they leave the cliffs, Craig-Forth !
 And soon the bulwark of the North,

Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down. 505

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined ;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung :
" Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray 510
Who townwards holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array ?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain side ?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom ? " 515
" No, by my word ;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A Baron's train would nobly grace."—
" Out, out, De Vaux ! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye ? 520
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew ;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle ! 525
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe :
The King must stand upon his guard ;
Douglas and he must meet prepared."— 530
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and
straight
They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf, 535
Held sad communion with himself :—
" Yes ! all is true my fears could frame ;

A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel. 540
 I, only I, can ward their fate,—
 God grant the ransom come not late!
 The Abbess hath her promise given,
 My child shall be the bride of Heaven;
 —Be pardoned one repining tear! 545
 For He who gave her, knows how dear,
 How excellent—but that is by,
 And now my business is to die.
 —Ye Towers! within whose circuit dread
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled, 550
 And thou, O sad and fatal mound!*
 That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
 As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
 The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb 555
 Prepare,—for Douglas seeks his doom!
 —But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
 And see! upon the crowded street,
 In motly groups what maskers meet! 560
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morris-dancers come.
 I guess by all this qua'nt array,
 The burghers hold their sport to-day;
 James will be there; he loves such show, 565
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where in proud career,
 The high-born tilter shivers spear.
 I'll follow to the Castle-park, 570
 And play my prize;—King James shall mark,
 If age has changed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft in happier days,
 His boyish wonder loved to praise."—

*An eminence on the north-east of the castle, where state criminals were executed. See Note.

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung, 575
 The quiv'ring drawbridge rocked and rung,
 And echoed loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the steep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went, 580
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.
 And ever James was bending low,
 To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
 Doffing his cap to city dame, 585
 Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame ;
 And well the simperer might be vain,—
 He chose the fairest of the train.
 Gravely he greets each city sire,
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire, 590
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
 " Long live the Commons' King, King James !"
 Behind the King thronged peer and knight, 595
 And noble dame and damsel bright,
 Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
 Of the steep street and crowded way.
 —But in the train you might discern
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern ; 600
 There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
 And the mean burgher's joys disdained ;
 And chiefs who, hostage for their clan,
 Were each from home a banished man,
 ' There thought upon their own gray tower, 605
 Their waving woods, their feudal power,
 And deemed themselves a shameful part
 Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
 Their chequered bands the joyous route. 610

There morricers, with bell at heel,
 And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
 But chief, beside the butts, there stand
 Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
 Friar Tuck with quarter-staff and cowl, 615
 Old Scathelock with his surly scowl,
 Maid Marian, fair as ivory-bone,
 Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
 Their bugles challenge all that will,
 In archery to prove their skill. 620
 The Douglas bent a bow of might.—
 His first shaft centered in the white,
 And when in turn he shot again,
 His second split the first in twain.
 From the King's hand must Douglas take 625
 A silver dart, the archer's stake;
 Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
 Some answ'ring glance of sympathy,—
 No kind emotion made reply!
 Indifferent, as to archer wight, 630
 The Monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
 The manly wrestlers take their stand.
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,
 And proud demanded mightier foes, 635
 Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.
 —For life is Hugh of Larbet lame,
 Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
 Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King 640
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
 As frozen drop of wintry dew.
 Douglas would speak, but in his breast
 His struggling soul his words suppress'd: 645
 Indignant then he turned him where
 Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
 To hurl the massive bar in air.

When each his utmost strength had shown,
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone 650
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
 And sent the fragment through the sky,
 A rood beyond the furthest mark ;—
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The gray-haired sires, who know the past, 655
 To strangers point the Douglast-cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang ; 660
 The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
 A purse well filled with pieces broad.
 Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
 And threw the gold among the crowd,
 Who now, with anxious wonder, scan, 665
 And sharper glance, the dark gray man ;
 Till whispers rose among the throng,
 Must to the Douglas blood belong ;
 The old men mark'd, and shook the head,
 To see his hair with silver spread, 670
 And winked aside, and told each son
 Of feats upon the English done,
 Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
 Was exiled from his native land.
 The women praised his stately form, 675
 Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm ;
 The youth with awe and wonder saw
 His strength surpassing Nature's law.
 Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
 Till murmur rose to clamours loud. 680
 But not a glance from that proud ring
 Of peers who circled round the King,
 With Douglas held communion kind,
 Or called the banished man to mind :
 No, not from those, who, at the chase, 685
 Once held his side the honoured place,

Begirt his board, and, in the field,
 Found safety underneath his shield ;
 For he, whom royal eyes disown,
 When was his form to courtiers known? 690

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
 And bade let loose a gallant stag,
 Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
 Two favourite greyhounds should pull down,
 That venison free, and Bordeaux wine, 695
 Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North,—
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth. 700
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And, dashing on the antler'd prey,
 Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport 705
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and, with his leash unbound,
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 —The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn, 710
 At last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd ;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck, 715
 In maiden glee, with garlands deck ;
 They were such playmates, that with name
 Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darkened brow and flashing eye;— 720
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride ;
 Needs but a buffet and no more,
 The groom lies senseless in his gore.

Such blow no other hand could deal, 725
 Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamoured loud the royal train,
 And brandished swords and staves amain.
 But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
 Back, on your lives, ye menial pack! 730
 Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
 King James, the Douglas, doomed of old,
 And vainly sought for near and far,
 A victim to atone the war,
 A willing victim, now attends, 735
 Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
 "Thus is my clemency repaid?
 Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said;
 "Of this mis-proud ambitious clan,
 Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man, 740
 The only man, in whom a foe
 My woman-mercy would not know;
 But shall a Monarch's presence brook
 Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
 What ho! the Captain of our Guard! 745
 Give the offender fitting ward,—
 "Break off the sports;"—for tumult rose,
 And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
 "Break off the sports!"—he said and frowned,
 "And bid our horsemen clear the ground."— 750

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
 Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
 The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
 Repell'd by threats and insult loud;
 To earth are borne the old and weak, 755
 The timorous fly, the women shriek;
 With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
 The hardier urge tumultuous war.
 At once round Douglas darkly sweep

The royal spears in circle deep, 760
 And slowly scale the pathway steep ;
 While on the rear in thunder pour
 The rabble with disordered roar.
 With grief the noble Douglas saw
 The commons rise against the law, 765
 And to the leading soldier said,—
 “ Sir John of Hyndford ! ’twas my blade,
 That knighthood on thy shoulder laid ;
 For that good deed, permit me then
 A word with these misguided men.— 770

XVIII.

“Hear, gentle friends! ere yet, for me,
 Ye break the bands of fealty.
 My life, my honour, and my cause,
 I tender free to Scotland’s laws.
 Are these so weak as must require 775
 The aid of your misguided ire ?
 Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
 Is then my selfish rage so strong,
 My sense of public weal so low,
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe, 780
 Those cords of love I should unbind,
 Which knit my country and my kind ?
 Oh no ! Believe, in yonder tower
 It will not soothe my captive hour,
 To know those spears our foes should dread, 785
 For me in kindred gore are red ;
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
 For me, that mother wails her son ;
 For me, that widow’s mate expires,
 For me, that orphan’s weep their sires, 790
 That patriots mourn insulted laws.
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.
 Oh let your patience ward such ill,
 And keep your right to love me still.”—

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again 795
 In tears, as tempest's melt in rain.
 With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
 For blessings on his generous head,
 Who for his country felt alone,
 And prized her blood beyond his own. 800
 Old men, upon the verge of life,
 Blessed him who stayed the civil strife ;
 The mothers held their babes on high,
 The self-devoted Chief to spy,
 Triumphant over wrong and ire, 805
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire :
 Ev'n the rough soldier's heart was moved ;
 As if behind some bier beloved,
 With trailing arms and drooping head,
 The Douglas up the hill he led, 810
 And at the castle's battled verge,
 With sighs, resigned his honoured charge.

XXX.

Th' offended Monarch rode apart,
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,
 And would not now vouchsafe again, 815
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
 " O Lennox, who would wish to rule
 This changling crowd, this common fool ?
 Hear'st thou," he said, " the loud acclaim,
 With which they shout the Douglas' name ? 820
 With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
 Strained for King James their morning note :
 With like acclaim they hailed the day
 When first I broke the Douglas' sway ;
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet, 825
 If he could hurl me from my seat.
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain !
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream ; 830

Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as frenzy's fevered blood.
 Thou many-headed monster thing,
 Oh who would wish to be thy king!—

XXXI.

“ But soft ! what messenger of speed 835
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed
 I guess his cognizance afar—
 What from our cousin, John of Mar ?”—
 “ He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound 840
 Within the safe and guarded ground :
 From some foul purpose yet unknown,—
 Most sure for evil to the throne,—
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summoned his rebellious crew ;
 'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid 845
 These loose banditti stand arrayed.
 The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
 To break their muster marched, and soon
 Your grace will hear of battle fought ;
 But earnestly the Earl besought, 850
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride.”—

XXXII.

“ Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
 I should have earlier looked to this : 855
 I lost it in this bustling day.
 —Retrace with speed your former way ;
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
 The best of mine shall be thy meed,
 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
 We do forbid th' intended war ; 860
 Roderick, this morn, in single fight.
 Was made our prisoner by a knight.
 And Douglas hath himself and cause
 Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
 The tidings of their leaders lost 865

Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
 Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
 For their Chief's crimes avenging steel.
 Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly,"—
 He turned his steed,—“My liege, I hie, 870
 Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
 I fear the broadswords will be drawn.”—
 The turf the flying courser spurned,
 And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day, 875
 Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
 Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
 And soon cut short the festal song.
 Nor less upon the saddened town
 The evening sunk in sorrow down; 880
 The burghers spoke of civil jar,
 Of rumoured feuds and mountain war,
 Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
 All up in arms:—the Douglas too,
 They mourned him pent within the hold 885
 “Where stout Earl William was of old,”*
 And there his word the speaker staid,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 Or pointed to his dagger blade.
 But jaded horsemen, from the west, 890
 At evening to the castle pressed;
 And busy talkers said they bore
 Tiding of fight on Katrine's shore;
 At noon the deadly fray begun,
 And lasted till the set of sun. 895
 Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
 Till closed the night her pennons brown,

*Stabbed by James II. in Stirling Castle.

NOTES.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

FIFTH CANTO.

*Not then claimed sovereignty his due,
While Albany with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command.*

Canto 5, Stanza vi.

There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds: and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed.

*The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.*

Canto 5, Stanza vii.

So far, indeed, was a *Creagh*, or foray, from being held disgraceful, that a young chief was always expected to show his talents for command, as soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighbouring sept, for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the *Sassenach*, Saxons, or Lowlanders, for which no apology was necessary.

———*I only meant
To show the rod on which you leant.*

Canto 5, Stanza xi.

This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact.

On Bochastle the mouldering lines.

Canto 5, Stanza xii.

The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle.

*See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Armed, like myself, with single brand.*

Canto 5, Stanza xii.

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon these punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true, that in formal combats in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly possible in the same circumstances. But in private duels it was often otherwise.

*Ill far'd it, then, with Roderic Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw.*

Canto 5, Stanza xv

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment.

*For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.*

Canto 5, Stanza xv.

The use of defensive armour, and particularly of the buckler or target, was general in Queen Elizabeth's time, although that of the single rapier seems to have been occasionally practised much earlier. Rowland Yorke, however, who betrayed the fort of Zutphen to the Spaniards, for which good service he was afterwards poisoned by them, is said to have been the first who brought the rapier-fight into general use.

*Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung.*

Canto 5, Stanza xvi.

I have not ventured to render this duel so savagely desperate as that of the celebrated Sir Ewan of Lochiel, chief of the clan Cameron, called from his sable complexion, Ewan Dhu. He was the last man in Scotland who maintained the royal cause during the great civil war, and his constant incursions rendered him a very unpleasant neighbour to the republican garrison at Inverlochy, now Fort William.

*Ye towers! within whose circuit dread,
A Douglas by his Sovereign bled.*

Canto 5, Stanza xx.

The fate of William, eighth earl of Douglas, whom James II stabbed in Stirling Castle, with his own hand, and while under his own royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history.

The burghers hold their sports to-day.

Canto 5, Stanza xx.

Every burgh in Scotland, of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period.

———*Robin Hood.*

Canto 5, Stanza xxii.

The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sport, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the 6th parliament of Queen Mary, 1555.

*Prize of the wrestling match, the king
To Douglas gave a golden ring.*

Canto 5, Stanza xxii.

The usual prize for wrestling was a ram and a ring, but the animal would have embarrassed my story.

END OF CANTO FIFTH.

The Lady of the Lake.

WITH NOTES.

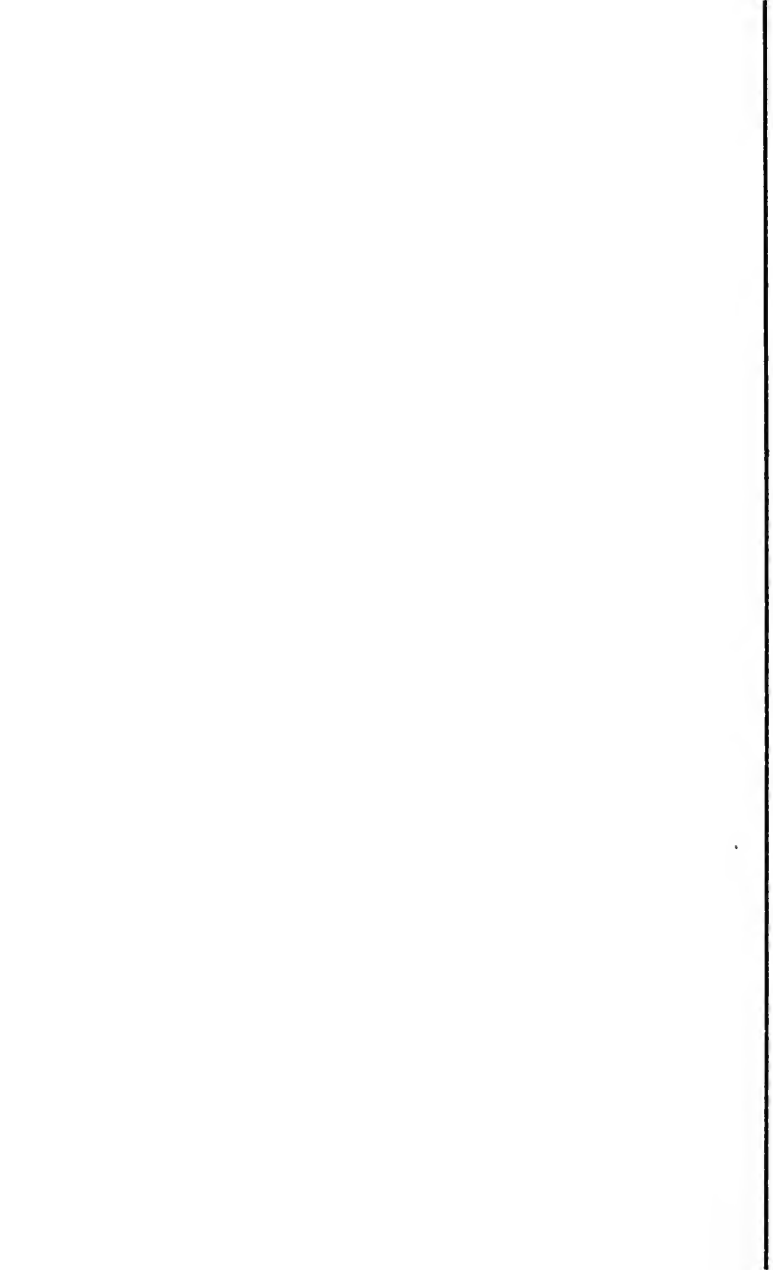
CANTO VI.

THE GUARD-ROOM.

TORONTO:

W. WARWICK, WELLINGTON STREET EAST.

1876.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE GUARD-ROOM.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city cast a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance ;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance, 5
Scaring the prowling robber to his den ;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, O! what scenes of woe, 10
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam !
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream ;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail, 15
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream.
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the tower of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang, 20.

While drums, with rolling note, foretell
 Relief to weary sentinel.
 Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
 The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
 And, struggling with the smoky air, 2c
 Deaden'd the torches yellow glare.
 In comfortless alliance shone
 The lights through arch of blackened stone,
 And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
 Faces deformed with beard and scar, 30
 All haggard from the midnight watch,
 And fevered with the stern debauch ;
 For the oak-table's massive board,
 Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
 And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown, 35
 Showed in what sport the night had flown.
 Some, weary, snored on floor and bench ;
 Some laboured still their thirst to quench ;
 Some chilled with watching, spread their hands
 O'er the huge chimney's dying brands, 40
 While round them, or beside them flung,
 At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
 Like tenants of a feudal lord,
 Nor owned the patriarchal claim 45
 Of chieftain in their leader's name ;
 Adventurers they, from far who roved,
 To live by battle which they loved.
 There the Italian's clouded face,
 The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace ; 50
 The mountain-loving Switzer there
 More freely breathed in mountain-air ;
 The Fleming there despised the soil
 That paid so ill the labourer's toil ;
 Their rolls shewed French and German name ; 55
 And merry England's exiles came,
 To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
 Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.

All brave in arms, well trained to wield
 The heavy halbert, brand, and shield; 60
 In camps licentious, wild and bold;
 In pillage, fierce and uncontrolled;
 And now, by holytide and feast,
 From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray, 65
 Fought 'twixt Loch-Katrine and Achray.
 Fierce was their speech, and mid their words,
 Their hands off grappled to their swords;
 Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
 Of wounded comrades groaning near, 70
 Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored,
 Bore token of the mountain sword,
 Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
 Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;—
 Sad burden to the ruffian joke, 75
 And savage oath by fury spoke;—
 At length up started John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer, 80
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew,
 When deed of danger was to do.
 He grieved, that day their games cut short,
 And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport, 85
 And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
 And while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear."—

V.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule 90
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,

That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black jack,
 And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink upsees* out, and a fig for the vicar! 95
 Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says, that Belzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker, 100
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches and why should he not?
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
 And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
 Who infringe the domains of our good mother
 Church. 105
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar.

VI.

The warder's challenge, heard without,
 Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went.— 110
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
 And, beat for jubilee the drum!
 A maid and minstrel with him come."—
 Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarr'd,
 Was entering now the Court of Guard, 115
 A harper with him, and, in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 "What news?" they roared.—"I only know, 120
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,
 As wild and as untameable
 As the rude mountains where they dwell.
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast." 125

*A Bacchanalian interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.

"But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land, 130
 The leader of a juggler band."—

VII.

"No comrade;—no such fortune mine.
 After the fight these sought our line,
 That aged harper and the girl, 135
 And, having audience of the Earl,
 Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
 And bring them hitherward with speed.
 Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
 For none shall do them shame or harm."—
 "Hear ye his boast! cried John of Brent, 40
 Ever to strife and jangling bent,—
 "Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
 And yet the jealous niggard grudge
 To pay the forester his fee!
 I'll have my share how'er it be, 145
 Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
 Bertram his forward step withstood;
 And, burning in his vengeful mood,
 Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
 Laid hand upon his dagger-knife; 150
 But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
 And dropp'd at once the tartan screen;—
 So, from his morning cloud, appears
 The sun of May, through summer tears.
 The savage soldiery, amazed, 155
 As on descended angel gazed;
 Ev'n hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
 Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke,—“Soldiers. attend!
 My father was a soldier's friend; 160

Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
 And with him in the battle bled.
 Not from the valiant, or the strong,
 Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."
 Answered De Brent, most forward still 165
 In every feat of good or ill.—
 "I shame me of the part I played :
 And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid !
 An outlaw I by forest laws,
 And merry Needwood knows the cause. 170
 Poor Rose—if Rose be living now"—
 He wiped his iron eye and brow,
 "Must bear such age, I think as thou.—
 Hear ye, my mates ;—I go to call
 The Captain of our watch to hall : 175
 There lies my halbert on the floor ;
 And he that steps my halbert o'er,
 To do the maid injurious part,
 My shaft shall quiver in his heart !—
 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough : 180
 Ye all know John De Brent. Enough."—

IX.

Their captain came, a gallant young,—
 (Of Tullibardine's house he sprung,)
 Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight ;
 Gay was his mien, his humour light, 185
 And, though by courtesy controlled.
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
 The high-born maiden ill could brook
 The scanning of his curious look
 And dauntless eye ;—and yet, in soothe, 190
 Yung Lewis was a generous youth ;
 But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
 Ill-suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range. 195
 —"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid !
 Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
 On Palfrey white, with harper hoar,

Like errant damosel of yore?
 Does thy high quest a knight require, 200
 Or may the venture suit a squire?"—
 Her dark eye flashed;—she paused and sighed,—
 "O What have I to do with pride!
 —Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father's life, 205
 I crave an audience of the King,
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the monarch to Fitz-James,"—

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took, 210
 With deep respect and altered look;
 And said,—“This ring our duties own;
 And pardon, if to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
 Lady, in aught my folly failed. 215
 Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.
 Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
 Repose you till his waking hour;
 Female attendance shall obey 220
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshall you the way.”
 But, ere she followed, with the grace
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared 225
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
 On the reluctant maiden's hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffered gold, 230
 “Forgive a haughty English heart,
 And O, forget its ruder part!
 The vacant purse shall be my share,
 Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
 Perchance, in jeopardy of war, 235
 Where gayer crests may keep afar.”

With thanks,—'twas all she could,—the maid
His rugged courtesy paid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent: 240
"My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
'Tenth in descent, since first my sires 245
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir. 250
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse, 255
A doleful tribute! o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right—deny it not!"—
"Little we reckon," said John of Brent,
"We Southern men, of long descent; 260
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer. 265
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then from a rusted iron hook, 270
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,

Lighted a torch, and Allan led
 Through grated arch and passage dread.
 Portals they passed, where, deep within
 Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din; 275
 Through rugged vaults, where loosely stored,
 Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword.
 And many a hideous engine grim,
 For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
 By artists formed, deemed it shame 280
 And sin to give their work a name.
 They halted at a low-browed porch,
 And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
 While bolt and chain he backward rolled
 And made the bar unclasp its hold. 285
 They entered :—'twas a prison-room
 Of stern security and gloom,
 Yet not a dungeon; for the day
 Through lofty gratings found its way,
 And rude and antique garniture 290
 Decked the sad walls and oaken floor;
 Such as the rugged days of old,
 Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
 "Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst remain
 Till the Leech visit him again. 295
 Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
 To tend the noble prisoner well."—
 Retiring then the bolt he drew,
 And the lock's murmurs grow'd anew.
 Roused at the sound, from lowly bed 300
 A Captive feebly raised his head;
 The wondering Minstrel looked and knew
 Not his dear lord, but Roderick the true!
 For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
 They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought. 305

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
 Shall never stem the billows more,
 Deserted by her gallant band,
 Amid the breakers lies astrand,—

So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu ! 310
 And oft his fevered limbs he threw
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides
 Lie rocking in th' advancing tides,
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
 Yet cannot leave her from her seat ;— 315
 O ! how unlike her course on sea !
 Or his free step on hill and lea !—
 Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
 “ What of thy lady ?—of my clan ?
 My mother ?—Douglas ?—tell me all ! 320
 Have they been ruined in my fall ?
 Ah, yes ! or wherefore art thou here !
 Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear.”—
 (For Allan who his mood well knew,
 Was chocked with grief and terror too.) 325
 “ Who fought ?—who fled ?—Old man, be brief ;
 Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live ?—who bravely died ?”—
 “ O, calm thee, Chief !” the Minstrel cried,
 “ Ellen is safe !—“ For that, thank heaven ! 330
 “ And hopes are for the Douglas given ;—
 The Lady Margaret too is well,
 And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
 Has never harp of minstrel told
 Of combat fought so true and bold, 335
 Thy stately pine is yet unbent,
 Though many a goodly bough is rent.”—

XIV.

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
 The fever's fire was in his eye ;
 But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks 340
 Chequered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 —“ Hark, Minstrel ! I have heard thee play,
 With measure bold on festal day,
 In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
 Shall harper play, or warrior hear ! . . . 345
 That stirring air that peals on high
 O'er Dermid's race our victory.—

Strike it!—and then (for well thou canst),
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight, 350
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
 For the fair field of fighting men, 355
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soared from battle fray."
 The trembling bard with awe obeyed,—
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid ;
 But soon remembrance of the sight 360
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awakened the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along ;
 As shallop launched on river's tide, 365
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning beam.

XV.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.

"The Minstrel came once more to view,
 The eastern ridge of Ben-venue, 370
 For, ere he parted, he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch-Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign laud,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand !
 No ripple on the lake, 375
 Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake ;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lie still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud, 380
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound

That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground 385
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams? 390
 —I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 To hero boune for battle-strife, 395
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life
 One glance at their array!

XVI.

" Their light-armed archers far and near
 Survived the tangled ground, 400
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
 The stern battalia crowned.
 No cymbal elashed, no clarion rang, 405
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread and armour's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad: 410
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
 That shadowed o'er their road.
 Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing, 415
 Save when they stirred the roe;
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
 The lake is passed, and now they gain 420
 A narrow and a broken plain,

Before the Trosach's rugged jaws ;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men. 425

XVII.

“ At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell.
 As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
 Had pealed the banner-cry of hell !
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven, 430
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,

The archery appear :
 For life ! for life ! their flight they ply—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids, and bonnets waving high, 435
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in their rear.

Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued :
 Before that tide of flight and chase, 440
 How shall it keep its rooted place
 The spearmen's twilight wood ?

—‘ Down, down,’ cried Mar, ‘ your lances down,
 Bear back both friend and foe !’
 Like reeds before the tempest frown, 445
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levell'd low ;

And closely shouldering side to side
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
 —‘ We'll quell the savage mountainer, 450
 As their Tinchel* cows the game !’

XVIII.

They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame.*

* A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the *Tinchel*.

" Bearing before them, in their course,
 The relics of the archer force, 445
 Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
 Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
 Above the tide each broadsword bright
 Was brandishing like beam of light,
 Each targe was dark below ; 460
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's wing,
 They hurled them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash,
 As when the whirlwind rends the ash ; 465
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
 As if a hundred anvils rang !
 But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank.—
 —' My banner-man, advance ! 470
 I see,' he cried, ' their column shake.—
 Now, gallants ! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance !"—
 The horsemen dashed among the route,
 As deer break through the broom ; 475
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
 Where, where, was Roderick then !
 One blast upon his bugle-horn 480
 Were worth a thousand men.
 And reflux through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was pour'd ;
 Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
 Vanished the mountain sword. 485
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
 So did the deep and darksome pass 490
 Devour the battle's mingled mass ;
 None linger now upon the plain,
 Save those who ne'er shall fight agan,

XIX.

“ Now westward rolls the battle’s din,
That deep and doubting pass within. 495
—Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait
Where the rude Trosach’s dread defile
Opens on Katrine’s lake and isle,—
Gray Ben-venue I soon repassed, 500
Loch-Katrine lay beneath me east.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given 505
Strange gust of wind from mountain glen
Swept o’er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eyes but saw the Trosach’s gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound, 510
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel-ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul. 515
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth, 520
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark’ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand; 525
Their banners stream like tatter’d sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale;
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance, 530
 The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
 Till Moray pointed with his lance,
 And cried—'Behold yon isle!—
 See! none are left to guard its strand,
 But women weak, that wring the hand; 535
 'Tis there of yore the robber-band
 Their booty wont to pile:—
 My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
 To him will swim a bowshot o'er,
 And loose a shallop from the shore. 540
 Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
 Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
 Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
 On earth his casque and corslet rung,
 He plunged him in the wave:— 545
 All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
 And to their clamours Ben-venue
 A mingled echo gave;
 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
 The helpless females scream for fear, 550
 And yells for rage the mountaineer.
 'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
 Poured down at once the louring heaven:
 A whirlwind swept Loch-Katrine's breast,
 Her billows reared their snowy crest. 555
 Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
 To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
 For round him showered, 'mid rain and hail,
 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
 In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo! 560
 His hand is on a shallop's bow.
 —Just then a flash of lightning came.
 It tinged the waves and strand with flame.—
 I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
 Behind an oak I saw her stand, 565
 A naked dirk gleamed in her hand;
 It darkened,—but amid the moan
 Of waves I heard a dying groan;—

Another flash!—the spearman floats—
 A weltering corse beside the boats, 570
 And the stern Matron o'er him stood,
 Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

“Revenge! revenge!” the Saxons cried,
 The Gael's exulting shout replied.
 Despite the elemental rage, 575
 Again they hurried to engage;
 But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
 Bloody with spurring came a knight,
 Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
 Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag. 580
 Clarion and trumpet by his side
 Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
 While, in the monarch's name, afar
 A herald's voice forbade the war,
 For Bothwell's Lord, and Roderick bold, 585
 Were both, he said, in captive hold.”—
 —But here the lay made sudden stand,
 The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!—
 Oft had he stol'n a glance, to spy
 How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy: 590
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand kept feeble time;
 That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song;
 At length, no more his deafened ear 595
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp,—his hands are clenched,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
 Is sternly fixed on vacancy;— 600
 Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
 His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
 Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit passed;
 But when he saw that life was fled, 605
 He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

LAMENT.

" And art thou cold, and lowly laid,
 Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade !
 For thee shall none a requiem say ? 610
 —For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honoured pine ! 615
 " What groans shall yonder valleys fill !
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill !
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
 Thy fall before the race was one, 620
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun !
 There breathes not clansman of thy line,
 But would have giv'n his life for thine.—
 O woe for Alpine's honoured pine !
 " Sad was thy lot on mortal stage ! 625
 The captive thrush may break the cage,
 The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
 Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain !
 And, when its notes awake again,
 Ev'n she, so long beloved in vain, 630
 Shall with my harp her voice combine,
 And mix her woe and tears with mine,
 To wail Clan-Alpine's honoured pine."—

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
 Remained in lordly bower apart, 635
 Where played, with many-coloured gleams,
 Through storied pane the rising beams.
 In vain on gilded roof they fall,
 And lighten'd up a tap'stried wall,
 And for her use a menial train 640

A rich collation spread in vain.
 The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
 Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
 Or, if she looked, 'twas but to say,
 With better omen dawned the day 645
 In that lone isle, where waved on high
 The dun deer's hide for canopy;
 Where oft her noble father shared
 The simple meal her care prepared,
 While Lufra, crouching by her side, 650
 Her station claimed with jealous pride,
 And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
 Spoke of the chase to Malcolm-Græme,
 Whose answer, oft at random made,
 The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.— 655
 Those who such simple joys have known
 Are taught to prize them when they're gone:
 But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
 'The window seeks with cautious tread.
 What distant music has the power 660
 To win her in this woeful hour!
 'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
 Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

" My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
 My idle greyhound loathes his food, 665
 My horse is weary of his stall,
 And I am sick of captive thrall.
 I wish I were as I have been,
 Hunting the hart in forests green,
 With bended bow and bloodhound free, 670
 For that's the life is meet for me.

" I hate to learn the ebb of time,
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch, along the wall. 675

The lark was wont my matins ring
 The sable rook my vespers sing;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.

"No more at dawning morn I rise, 680
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet, 685
 While glad the eve on wing of glee,—
 That life is lost to love and me?—

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
 The list'ner had not turned her head,
 It trickled still, the starting tear, 690
 When light a footstep struck her ear,
 The Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
 She turned the hastier, lest again
 The prisoner should renew his strain.
 "O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said; 695
 "How may an almost orphan maid
 Pay deep the debt"——"O say not so?
 To me no gratitude you owe.
 Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
 And bid thy noble father live; 700
 I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
 With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
 No tyrant he, though ire and pride
 May lead his better mood aside.
 Come, Ellen, come?—'tis more than time; 705
 He holds his court at morning prime."
 With beating heart and bosom wrung,
 As to a brother's arm she clung.
 Gently he dried the falling tear,
 And gently whispered hope and cheer; 710
 Her faltering steps half led, half stayed
 Through gallery fair and high arcade,

Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light, 715
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And, from their tissue, fancy frames 720
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing stayed;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed 725
For him she sought, who owned this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate.—
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,— 730
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare: and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent! 735
Midst furs and silks and jewels' sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King!

XXVII.

As wreath of snow on mountain breast, 740
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She showed the ring,—she clasped her hands. 745
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that suppliant look!

Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
 Checked with a glance the circle's smile,
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed, 750
 And bade her terrors be dismissed :—
 “ Yes, Fair ; the wandering poor Fitz-James
 The fealty of Scotland claims.
 To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring ;
 He will redeem his signet-ring. 755
 Ask nought for Douglas ;—yester even,
 His prince and he have much forgiven :
 Wrong hath he had from sland'rous tongue,
 I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
 We would not to the vulgar crowd 760
 Yield what they crave with clamour loud.
 Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
 Our council aided, and our laws.
 I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
 With stout De Vaux and grey Glencairn ; 765
 And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
 The friend and bulwark of our throne.—
 But, lovely infidel, how now ?
 What clouds thy misbelieving brow ?
 Lord James of Douglas lend thine aid. 770
 Thou must confirm this doubting maid.”

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
 And on his neck his daughter hung.
 The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
 The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,— 775
 When it can say, with godlike voice,
 Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice !
 Yet would not James the general eye
 On nature's raptures long should pry ;
 He stepped between—“ Nay, Douglas, nay, 780
 Steal not my proselyte away !
 The riddle 'tis my right to read,
 That brought this happy chance to speed.—
 Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
 In life's more low but happier way, 785

'Tis under name which veils my power,
 Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower,
 Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
 And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
 Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
 Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
 Then in a tone apart and low,
 —“ Ah! little traitress! none must know
 What idle dream, what lighter thought,
 What vanity full dearly bought,
 Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
 My spell-bound steps to Ben-venue,
 In dangerous hour, and all but gave
 Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!
 Aloud he spoke—“ Thou still dost hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?”—

790

795

800

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guessed,
 He probed the weakness of her breast;
 But, with that consciousness, there came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,
 And more she deemed the monarch's ire
 Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
 And, to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.—
 “ Forbear thy suit:—the King of Kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings.
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
 Hast thou no other boon to crave?
 No other captive friend to save?
 Blushing, she turned her from the King,
 And to the Douglas gave the ring,
 As if she wished her sire to speak

805

81

8

8

The suit that stained her glowing cheek.—
 “Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force, 825
 And stubborn justice holds her course.
 Malcolm, come foith!”—And, at the word,
 Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland’s Lord.
 “For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
 From thee may Vengeance claim her dues, 830
 Who nurtured underneath our smile,
 Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
 And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
 A refuge for an outlawed man,
 Dishonouring thus thy loyal name,— 835
 Fetters and warder for the Græme!”—
 His chain of gold the King unstrung,
 The links o’er Malcolm’s neck he flung,
 Then gently drew the glittering band,
 And laid the clasp on Ellen’s hand. 840

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
 On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
 In twilight cove the glow-worm lights her spark,
 The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending.
 Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending, 845
 And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
 Thy numbers sweet with Nature’s vespers blending.
 With distant echo from the fold and lea
 And herd-boy’s evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp! 850
 Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay.
 Much have I owed thy strains on life’s long way,
 Through secret woes the world has never known, 855
 When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
 And bitter was the grief devoured alone.
 That I o’erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string! 860
'Tis now a Seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring 870
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silence all!—Enchantress, fare the well!

NOTES.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

SIXTH CANTO.

Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray.

Canto 2, Stanza 1.

That highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service, the bard, as a family officer, admits of very easy proof.

———*The Græme.*

Canto 2, Stanza vi.

The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which for metrical reasons, is here spelled after the Scottish pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling.

This harp which erst Saint Modan swayed.

Canto 2, Stanza vii.

I am not prepared to show that Saint Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument, which, retaining as was natural, a portion of the sanctity attached to its master's character, announced future events by its spontaneous sound.

*Ere Douglases to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.*

Canto 2, Stanza viii.

The downfall of the Douglases of the house of Angus, during the reign of James V. is the event alluded to in the text.

In Holy-Rood a knight he slew.

Canto 2, Stanza xli.

This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility.

And Snowdoun's knight is Scotland's king.

Canto 6, Stanza xxvi.

James V., of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises.

———*Stirling's tower*
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims.

Canto 6, Stanza xxviii.

William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle, Snowdoun.

END OF CANTO SIXTH.



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Scott, (Sir) Walter, bart.
The lady of the lake

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